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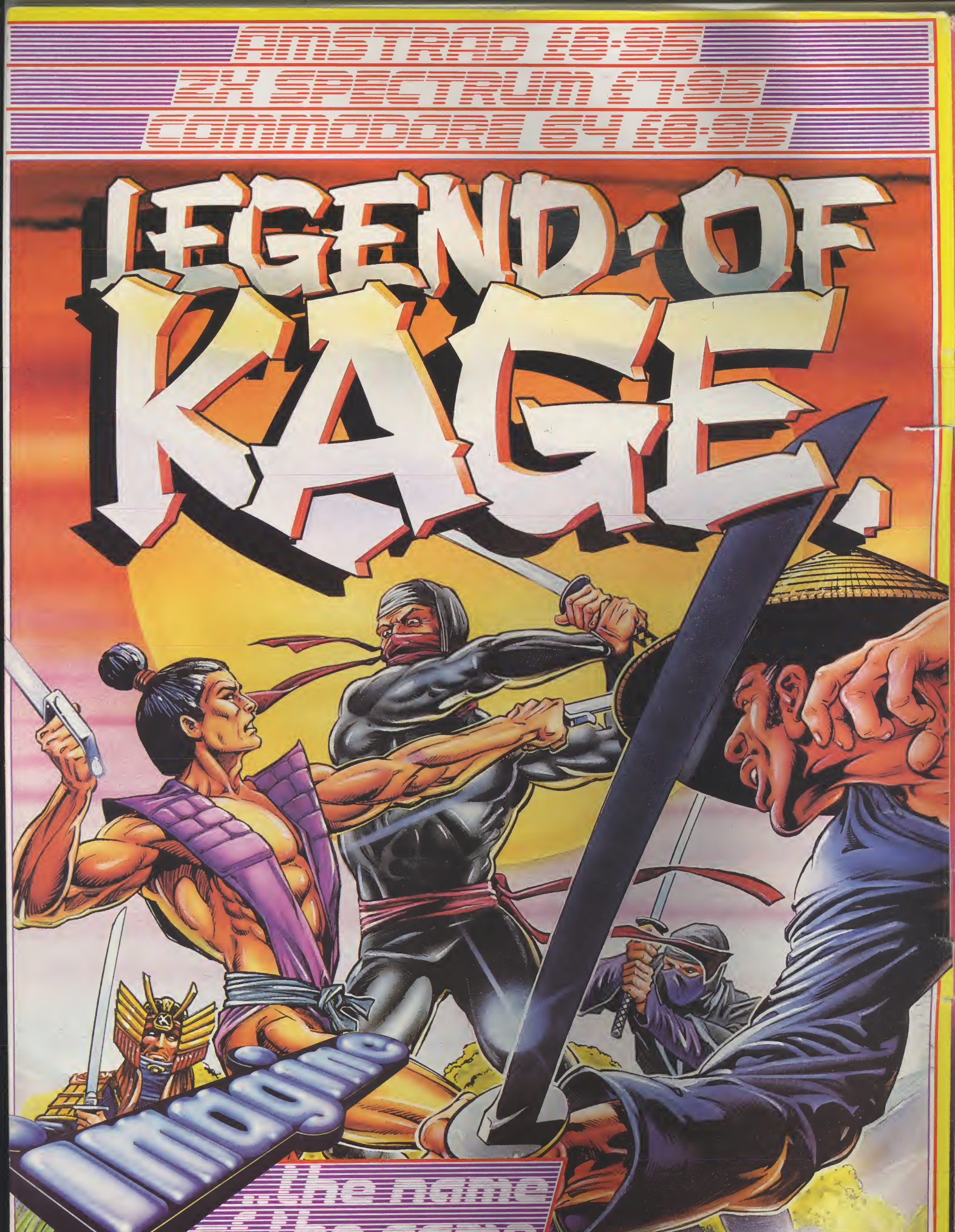

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CRASH

ZX SPECTRUM

ISSUE No. 36 1986/87

PUBLISHERS
Roger Kean, Oliver Frey, Franco Frey
Publishing Executive/Editor
Graeme Kidd
Assistant Editor
Lee Paddon
Sub Editor
Ciaran Brennan
Staff Writers
Lloyd Mangram, Hannah Smith
Adventure Editor
Derek Brewster
Tech Tipster
Simon Goodwin
Contributing Writers
Jon Bates, Brendon Kavanagh, John Minson
Production Controller
David Western
Art Director
Dick Shiner
Assistant Art Director
Gordon Druce
Illustrators
Ian Craig, Oliver Frey
Production
Seb Clare, Tim Croton, Mark Kendrick, Tony Lorton, Nick Orchard, Michael Parkinson, Cameron Pound, Jonathan Rignall, Matthew Uffindell
Advertisement Manager
Roger Bennett
Advertisement Assistant
Nick Wild
Subscriptions
Denise Roberts
Mail Order
Carol Kinsey

Editorial and Production
1/2 King Street, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1AQ
☎0584 5851
Mail Order and Subscriptions
PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB
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Look out for the first CRASH of 1987. It'll be in the shops on January 22nd

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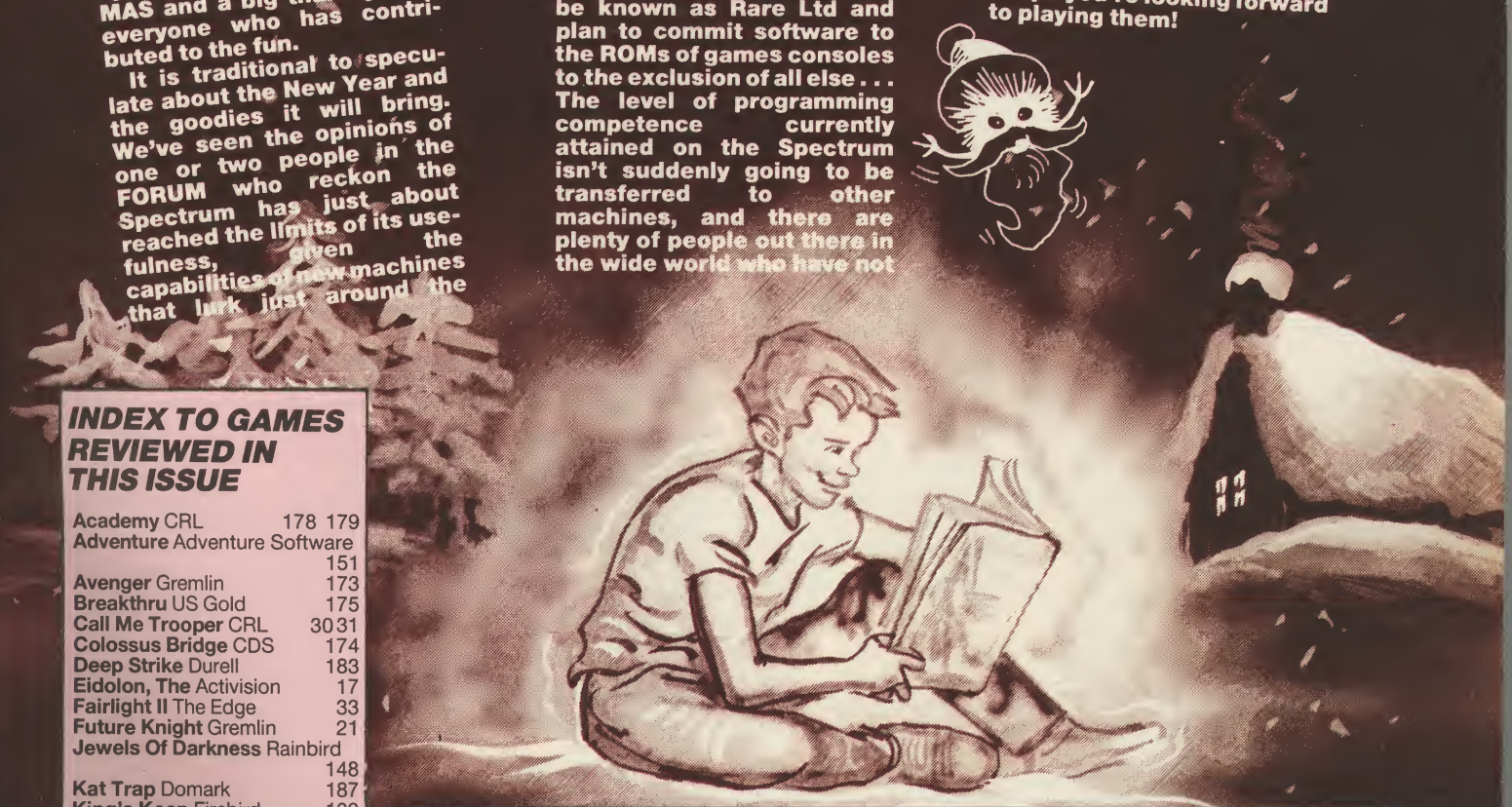
Graeme Kidd

There isn't a great deal to say at this festive time of year — apart from MERRY CHRISTMAS and a big thank you to everyone who has contributed to the fun.

It is traditional to speculate about the New Year and the goodies it will bring. We've seen the opinions of one or two people in the FORUM who reckon the Spectrum has just about reached the limits of its usefulness, given the capabilities of new machines that lurk just around the corner. Maybe the proliferation of high quality software that we've seen over the past few weeks will change the minds of these Scrooges — Spectrum owners are going to be spoiled for choice when it comes to Christmas shopping, compiling lists for Santa and spending present money in the January sales.

The Second Coming of dedicated Games Consoles, due any day now, is also supposed to be putting a nail in the Spectrum's coffin. Unlikely, even if Ultimate Play the Game now prefer to be known as Rare Ltd and plan to commit software to the ROMs of games consoles to the exclusion of all else . . . The level of programming competence currently attained on the Spectrum isn't suddenly going to be transferred to other machines, and there are plenty of people out there in the wide world who have not yet joined in the fun of playing games on the Spectrum. Now that software houses are paying more than lip service to the 128, games such as Starglider are beginning to show just what the race-tuned Spectrum can offer. Let's just hope that Amstrad can sort out the teething problems that surround the integral cassette recorder before prospective purchasers look elsewhere . . .

We're all looking forward to reviewing the new games of 1987 here in CRASH Towers. I hope you're looking forward to playing them!



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10:Nov 84 ●Battlefield Joystick — comparisons●Deus Ex Machina

17:Jun 85 ●Denton Designs●Frankie●Spectrum surgery●Sinclair Story 3●Knight Lore Map 1●Underwurlde Map 2●Tape to Microdrive●Leonardo Graphics utility●Datel sound sampler●Artist: David Thorpe

18:Jul 85 ●Gremlin Graphics profile●Artist Bob Wakelin●Sinclair TV●Tape Magazines●Leonardo utility part two●CRASHBACK looks again at games in issue 8●Gyron Map of Atrium●Modems round-up●And the cover that had the Jehovas Jumping!

19:Aug 85 ●WITHOUT PAGES 123,124,125 and 126. WITH:●CRL Profile●Pull out Oliposter — Fighting Spectrum●Mirrorsoft Profile●Inside the Timex 2068●Round Up of BASIC compilers●On the Cover Artist Rich Shenfield●Maps of Dynamite Dan and Shadowfire

20:Sep 85 ●ALIEN 8 and DUN DARACH maps●Electronic Pencil Company Profile●Part Two of BASIC Compilers Round-up●The 64K Spectrum●Design Design Autoprofile, Part 1●Rod Cousens Interview

21:Oct 85 ●Previews of MARSPORT, ASTROCLONE, ELITE●NODES OF YESOD map●Holografix profile — how to make a Hologram●Crashtionnaire analysis●Platinum Productions profile

22:Nov 85 ●Feature on small computer magazines — looking at the opposition●Microdrive tips and hints in TECH NICHE and part two of the fast storage feature●Susan Rowe is on the Cover●An inside look at Fantasy Gamebooks

23:Dec 85 ●Visit to Melbourne House●Minson goes Surfing●The Design Design autoprofile ends●Computer graphics feature — On The Cover is Dave Beeson from Central TV●Scary cover and Scary Preview of Friday 13th

Xmas 1985/6 ●On the Cover Special — our very own Oliver Frey occupies five pages●Profile of the Gargoyle Games crew●Lloyd's Lookback, 1985 revisited●Hewson Consultants profile●Short story●Festive Fun and Frolics

25:Feb 86 ●Durell — the profile●A chat with the Microsphere team●Double Dose of Jetman●Gremlin Graphics bring a Ninja to the Spectrum●TECH NICHE looks at a FORTH add-on and extensions to ZX BASIC

26:Mar 86 ●ST BRIDE's Profile● A first look at the Spectrum 128●Micronet 800●Romantic Robot's Multiface One under scrutiny●Diary of 2186

27:Apr 86 ●Massive 23 page Playing Tips Supplement●1985 Readers Awards results●Mel Croucher interview●Imagine profile●Round up of 128K games●A visit to the first Play By Mail convention

28:May 86 ●Update on the Fanzine scene●MARTECH profile and PLANETS preview●DIY Composite Video Interface●Inside Cheetah's SpecDrum●FRONTLINE Mini Strategyback●CRASHTIONNAIRE 86 analysis

29:Jun 86 ●First PBM MAILBOX and CRASH GALLERY●SpecDrum listing●Homegrown software●REALTIME profile●Compilations compared●Maps of CYLU, SIR FRED, SABOTEUR and Parts 1 and 2 of TANTALUS

30:Jul 86 ●More CRASH/RAINBIRD Gallery●More Homegrown Software●THE BIRTH OF A GAME: some early entries●Good Games by DESIGN●Luna Jetman returns

31:Aug 86 ●Hannah goes wrestling!●A look in the DRAGON's LAIR●Sinclair 'LOKI' myths exploded●Erniesoft interview●Pete Tamlyn starts looking at Role Playing Computer games●Wordprocessor roundup

32:Sept 86 ●GAC reviewed●The Music Box opened●Pete Tamlyn concludes●MIKRO-GEN's Dave Perry talks about Wally and Ricky Steele●Repairing your Quickshot 2●Dan Dare arrives!

33:Oct 86 ●Jon Ritman — Mr BATMAN and Mr MATCH DAY●The GENESIS project: the programming begins●Hunter S Minson goes missing!●Multitracking SpecDrum●Costa Panaya interviewed

34:Nov 86 ●Don Priestley, creator of POPEYE and TRAPDOOR interviewed● MUSIC MACHINE reviewed●Games Day report●CHEETAH's Sound Sampler sampled●PBM Diplomats Directory opened●GENESIS — Kat Trap previewed and the Marketing Mix explained

35:Dec 86 ●Dan Malone, the artist behind PALACE interviewed●RAM ELECTRONICS release a ROM-based wordprocessor●GLIDER RIDER map●MIDI interface examined●Spectrum Plus Two problems examined

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Fear & Loathing

MORE PARTIES . . . AND A CRYSTAL BALL

The phone is ringing. "Got a little job for you, Minson. Like you to do an end of the year article. Make it double length. Plenty of time. Don't need it till the end of this week."

Goddam, they want me to wind up '86, and because magazines don't just appear out of nowhere, I'm still in the process of struggling with November. Okay, then — let's tackle that before Hunter S gets serious and actually talks about . . . (wouldja believe?) computing.

It was about this time last year that I got chucked out of the Savoy Hotel in London. The occasion was the National Computer Games Championship. Well, the Championship was here again, but the Savoy had refrained from potting its spruce until after the event, so no Xmas pin-up piccie, I'm afraid.

No — this time my problems arose from the labyrinthine nature of the Savoy's basement. As I wandered I began to experience that feeling of despair, well known to adventurers who make the mistake of straying into the 'dark forest by the roadside' then find that 'Go North' no longer helps.

TERRY WEIGHT

When I finally did find my way out of the maze, it was into a blaze of light. Television cameras were rolling as Cuddly **Dave Carlos**, his beard specially trimmed for the occasion, announced the contestants. The effects was most amusing — rather like Terry Waite, to whom Dave bears more than a passing resemblance, compereing Miss World.

Talking of Miss World, the lovely **Janice Gallagher** dragged me out of the spotlights, explained that they didn't want to do an in-depth interview with me quite at that moment, and propelled me towards the bar. She also told me that the game that was being used in the final was *Cop Out*, the brand new one from **MIKRO-GEN**, who celebrated their fifth birthday while I was doing in depth research in Sweden (see the forthcoming article in **LM** — if I ever get it together).

This omnipotent organ had neglected to enter a contestant, so who won was almost incidental to the extremely well-stocked bar. Almost, I say, because though the victor was an Amstrad person (yawn), he was the official POPULAR COMPUTING WEEKLY candidate. Now, as the sharp eyed amongst you will know, I write for PCW. In fact, they were almost the first computer title to print my reviews, so I have a great sentimental attachment to them.

Better still, the champion **David Litherland** comes from Horwich, which lies next to Bolton, 'oop north in Lancashire. Bolton just happens to be my home town, and I know the cosmopolitan charms of Horwich too. So to David I say, congratulations . . . and don't worry, you too may escape like I did!

Actually, I almost had much more to say to him, owing to an oversight on somebody's part. You see, when it looked like The Battling Boltonian was a dead cert, Carlos started searching for a PCW representative . . . only to find there wasn't one. Such are the pressures of producing a weekly, they'd planned to roll up at the very last minute!

Chaos reigned. It was even suggested that I should act on behalf of the magazine, but I declined and instead suggested that Carlos should get on the dog and bone immediately. Which he did, summoning the very lovely **Christine Erskine** herself. She arrived, slightly out of breath, to pat their man's back.

JOYSTICK WIMPS

Competition of a different sort the following day. **Mike Baxter**, had invited the press, magazine advertising staff and even his Auntie down to that almost trendy cross between a restaurant and a television showroom; The Video Cafe.

The excuse for this bash was the **KONIX** *Speedking* joystick, an object which resembles nothing more than that most tuneless musical instrument, the occarina. For some reason, **KONIX** wanted the gentlemen of the press to try and destroy two of these things.

Now there is only one way of killing a joystick for many people, and that's that classic of wrist action, *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*. And as an added incentive, whoever scored highest in this test of waggling could win a weekend for two in Amsterdam.

The whole lunch was most revealing. Everybody wanted to go to Amsterdam, of course. But when it came to coming forward . . . well, everyone seemed a little behind. Could it be that all these editors and star writers were shy of their games playing prowess?

The atmosphere was like a superpowers summit. Everyone was trying to do deals with each other. "Look, I'm brilliant at this game, but I won't compete so that you can win . . . but only if you promise to take me with you."

But not for me such cowardly tactics. I'd been in training for this event for weeks. I'd been out jogging (once). I'd done press up (four of them). I'd taken every type of anabolic steroid I could find in Boots. And. . . . unfortunately, I'd neglected to play the game.

Yes — as I sat at a sweaty Spectrum I realised that I'd never played *Decathlon* before! I'd socked it to *Supertest*; I'd sweltered in the *Summer Games*; I'd waggled my stick all *Winter* . . . but I'd dumped out on *Decathlon*. This did mean that while I was okay on the tests of speed, like the sprint, I had no idea what I was doing when it came to the jumping events.

My performance was hardly Chariots of Fire. More Skateboards of Hot Air really. But it still placed me about fourth. Now, this all raises a question of journalistic ethics. Just how much do I tell you about the performances of my fellow hacks? I fear I must be discrete.

There was one journo who make a feeble excuse about having lots of work to do back at the office, just before his turn. No names, mind — just let's say he was the 'eminence gris' of another Sinclair publication. Probably had to get back to await the arrival of the Loki and check the photofiles for more pictures of NEWSFIELD Reviewer-Champion **Ben Stone** at the ZX Microfair to print in his organ!

And what about the editor who managed to come last? Perhaps he would be happier editing SMASH HITS after all! The weekend in Amsterdam went to the YOUR COMMODORE competitor though. Obviously a man who gives his right wrist lots of exercise.

The real winners were the joysticks. Not only did they stand up to the action, their easy switching meant that it was possible to go for that Coe burst of speed and maintain it. Driven on to greater things, **KONIX** is at this very moment inventing a robot joystick destructor, and is inviting you, the public, to guess how long a *Speedking* will endure this bionic bashing.

If you'd like to win £100, whizz off your estimate to **KONIX**, C/o **SOLUTION PUBLIC RELATIONS, 2 Wellingtonia Court, Varndean Park, Brighton BN1 6TD** and mark it *Daley Thompson's Decathlon Test*. Don't forget your name and address and do mention that Hunter S sent you. You'd better be quick off the mark, because the big event is happening in early January.

"LUNCHBREAKS"

That brings us up to date, apart from one thing . . . it seems that **MICRONET**'s Slasher has done a far better job digging up the dirt on Minson than the late, unlamented Shadow ever did in ZZAP!

From what I hear, he got the facts right, including how I used to howl with an obscenely named punk band who made the Mary Chain sound sophisticated, and (worse still) my involvement with an Amstrad word processor magazine!

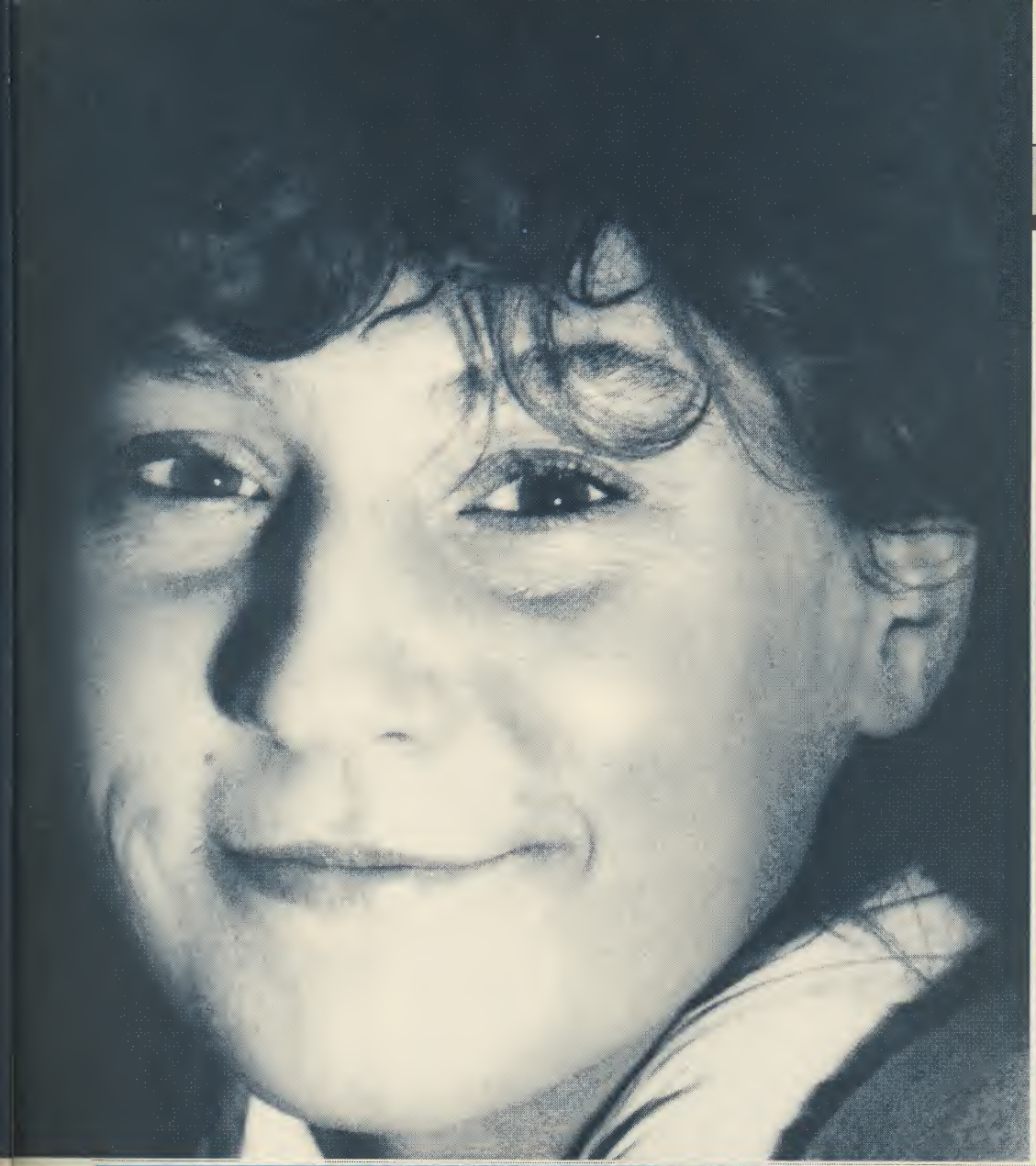
Well done then, Slasher. I bear you no grudge at all, and certainly wouldn't dream of being the Gremlin that blew your anonimity, now that you're a Bourne-again gossip!

So that's the way the year will end, if not with a BANG (RIP), certainly not with a whimper either. There's just the round up of Christmas parties to come, and don't worry — I'll be there, drinking Bloody Marys and getting into dangerous craziness.

But before I get too out of my head on every heinous substance known to mankind, I want to try and look back at '86. No I don't. CRASH wants me to look back at '86. I want to look forward into '87.

CONSOLEATION?

1987, we are told, will be the year of the games console revival. **ATARI** is back with the buggers, and **ARIOLASOFT** is putting its



The delectable Clare Edgeley, once an EMAP staff writer, now a RAIN BIRD person. Hear her dulcet tones on the 128K version of STARGLIDER

weight behind **SEGA**'s machine, while the **NINTENDO** contender is also on the way over here. 1987 or '82?

What does it all mean? For one thing, the division between players and programmer is out in the open, once and for all. There was a great lie about computers: ''But if I don't have one, how can I learn to program, and if I don't learn to program, I won't be prepared for the (gasp!) Silicon Revolution.''

Now I, for one, have never been convinced that learning where LOAD and two quotation marks lie on a keyboard counts as programming. But it's enough for all the people who use these three keystrokes to unleash the fearsome power of shoot em ups and adventures.

The plain fact is that many people don't give a twopenny damn about how structured their BASIC is. And this is what the console manufacturers and distributors are counting on. Gamers just want to have fun.

Ahh, but I can hear the cries and shouts of the hacking brigade already as their champion, the charming Hannah Smith, takes up the challenge. ''But what about the cheat pokes, which are amongst the most popular features in the magazines?''

Typing in twenty lines of code from a magazine is as much like programming as copying twenty lines of Romeo and Juliet is to becoming Shakespeare. It's only a minority who actually analyse the code for the benefit of others. The consoles, with their vast RAMs and instant loading are set to kill the games computers with their limited sound and colour, like the Spectrum. Or are they?

1987 is supposed to be all explosions and wrecked joysticks, even if there are no more infinite lives. But by losing that minority of freaks, weirdos and eggheads who actually like to sit up all night, up to their elbows in code, the console manufacturers are also losing the people who have made the Spectrum what it is today.

Just take a look at a 1983 Spectrum game and you'll see what I mean. Sure, it will still be playable — addictive for a while, even — but comparable with today's programs? Do leave it out!

The history of Spectrum programming is littered with milestones; programs that did the impossible with the humble machine. *Lords of Midnight* with its apparently infinite landscape. *Starstrike 3D* with its superfast vector graphics. Even utilities like *The Quill*, which turned everyone into adventure writers.

Sure, you can buy these titles on other machines. But they originated on the Spectrum, and there's a sense of excitement about the machine — far more than any other micro. Back bedroom boffins sweated into the early hours to learn code, just so they could bring you *Manic Miner* or *Arcadia*. They pounded away at rubbery keys to push the machine forward.

ON THE BLOWER

But where are the consoles' keyboards? If they become available at all, it will be as optional extras, at some unspecified later date. As to saving your efforts to tape — no way! This is the age of the EPROm blower. Even if you can afford that little extra, you could well find that you can't sell your programs direct. First you'll have to get a licence from the distributor. Who will in turn have to get the, 'Ha-so! Ho-kay!' from Japan.

The consoles symbolise one of the things that is wrong with this world; the big boys taking over. But the big boys don't necessarily know what you, the individual, want. At the moment they think it's shoot 'em ups and driving games and platforms and ladders. Noisy shoot 'em ups. Fast driving games. Colourful platforms and ladders. But if you've already cut the teeth on the Spectrum, you'll have been through that stage already.

If you want these games, they're already available, a lot cheaper than they'll be in cartridge form. And when you get tired of zapping the BEMs, your Spectrum lets move onto something a little more sophisticated. They say that there are only seven plots in the whole of literature. That means there are about five in gaming. And the consoles want to restrict you to three of them!

THE MIGHTY FALLING?

Consoles won't take over but big things seem set to happen in the world of computing. In the last couple of months rumours have abounded concerning the impending collapse of certain software companies. We are not just talking little league here, but about big boys. Companies which own several labels. Companies which used to top the charts. Companies who have been around since the beginning.

I don't intend to name names. The software industry is always full of rumours, so it wouldn't be fair. And there are the laws of libel to consider. But I wouldn't be in the least surprised that in three or four months time things looked very different.

It's another example of businesses getting too big; out of hand and out of touch. A big company has to put out products to convince the punters that it's big. Unluckily it then screws itself by not giving the programmers time to develop games. It backs movies in expensive tie-ins . . . only to have the game appear nine months after the movie has flopped.

The year has produced some great games, but the weeks leading up to Christmas have produced some turkeys too! There have been games which have attempted to do the impossible, sadly proving that yes, the Spectrum does have its limits.

I don't know what will happen in '87 but I'm rather worried. The Spectrum is an old machine. We can only push it so far in any one direction before it shows its age. Perhaps the time has come for the bedroom boffins to get back to work, free from the pressures of tie-ins, and for more time to be spent on original game design. Because if this industry does contract, it means me, and many more like me, may have to buy their own liquid lunches!

A Merry Christmas and let's hope it's a Happy New Year too.

Hunter S Minson

The Scrapbook

Hannah goes shopping for a man and comes back with... Gum!

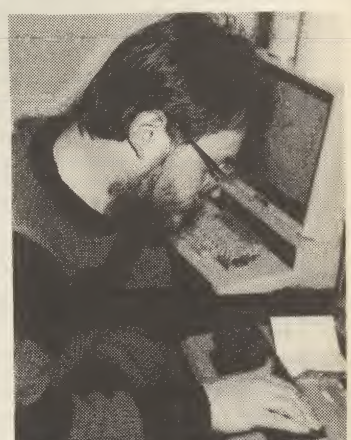
A rosy cheeked Girlie Tipster...

...keeps sharp with a pinch of Granny Grunge's Ludlow Snuff

'I'd much rather have a cup of tea, any time' says Boy Slumpter busking with his best frock...

The Doc martened one sports a No 1 crop...

The photo the News of the World dare not print



...meanwhile here's a hairy editor we prepared earlier

Mr Puniverse is lent a mystery hand

Lee Paddon prepares to get to grips with Sam Fox's strip poker

EDITORS AT PLAY: 1

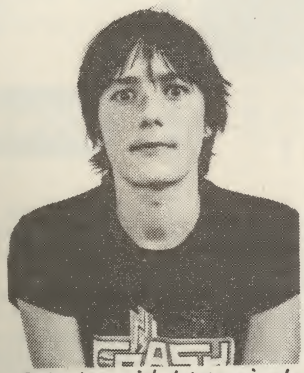
Failing to find a phone box, YOUR SINCLAIR's Ed Kevin Cox gets into superman mode

EDITORS AT PLAY: 2

David 'Greta Garbo' Kelly, SINCLAIR USER's Ed wants to be alone

EDITORS AT PLAY: 3

Oy, I told you not to let my octopus near that old Flatulence Bitter - he's nearly legless



Before he got into lagers seriously Ben Stone modelled Crash T-shirt

... now he models tree frogs

THEY STOLE A MILLION

Producer: 39 Steps
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Tigress Designs**

This game comes in two parts. In the first, you pick one of five targets. The money made from one job is then re-invested in the next. A raid on the local coin dealers should net you a few thousand. This can then be used to buy the information you need, and a team of crack specialists, for the art gallery job.

There is a rogue's gallery of 18 hoodlums. Each has a dossier on their past experience, but the nitty gritty is in the last page of information: how much they cost to hire, how much of the 'take' do they expect and what are their skills. This determines how long they'll take to pick locks, dis-able alarms or blow a safe.

At this stage of the game there is lots of information you can buy on the target. Most of this is vital stuff - like where the alarms are, and what you are after. If you just go in blind and whip everything, the 'fence' won't give you the full value of the items - whatever happened to honour among thieves!

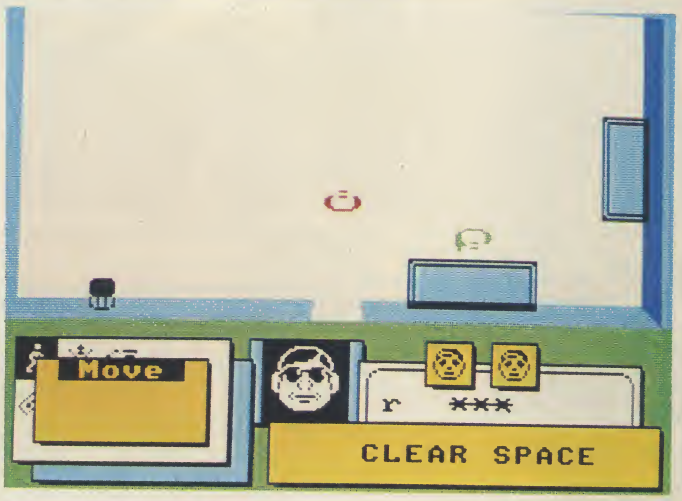
Once you're happy with your team, load the next section of the game. The raid must now be planned. This means telling each member of the team exactly what to do. This is all icon-driven. First toggle between the members of your team, select one, and then tell him where to move and what to do. Most actions take time. It is therefore essential to make sure that the actions of the various team members are co-ordinated so that, for instance, two men don't try going through the same door from opposite sides, or no-one breaks in to an alarmed case before the alarm has been dealt with.

Once a 'track' for each crook has been made, the program has extensive editing facilities. This allows you to re-organise the raid to make more efficient use of your men. Also at higher levels, you will have to cope with security men on regular patrols, so you must time the paths so as not to arouse their suspicions.

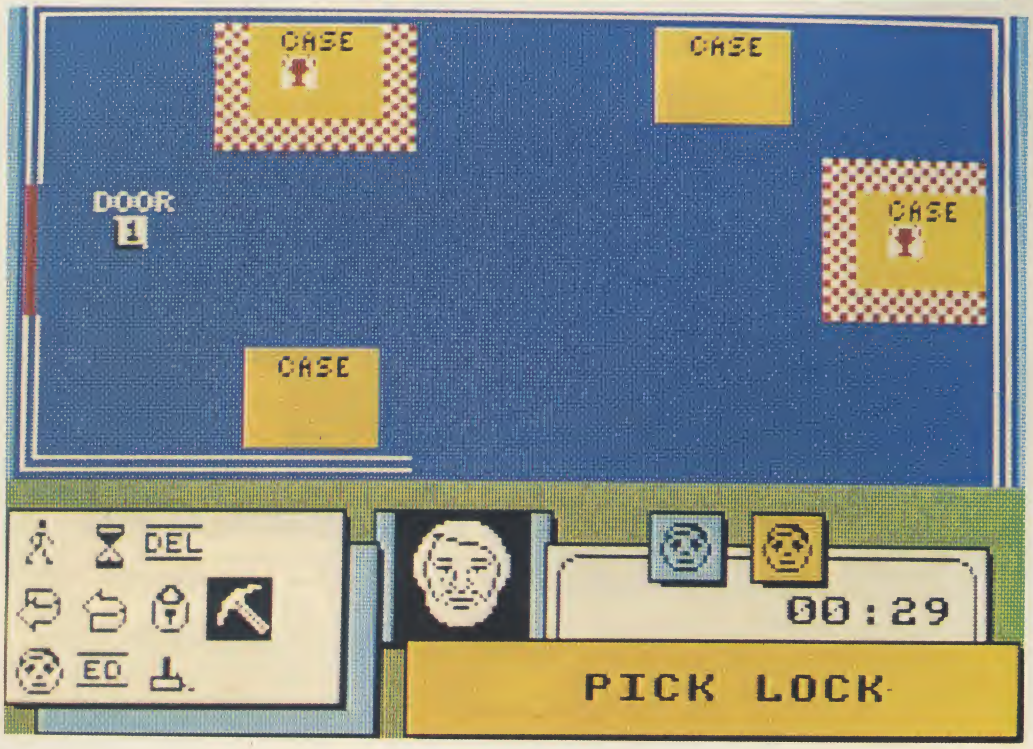
Last but not least, to the raid itself. The men go through their pre-ordained patterns. Messages come up if there are problems, (i.e.locked doors, 'the filth' etc.). During the raid, you control the boss (who can do a bit of pilfering himself), or act as look-out. He can assist members of the gang who get in trouble, abort the raid and return to the planning stage, or tell the men to freeze when a police patrol goes past.

After all this, the dosh is split up, and you load up the first part of the game again, just in time to go for another job.

Controlling the big boss during the raid. One of 'da boys' tackles a display cabinet



Planning the coin raid, 29 seconds into the raid, 'fingures' tackles a locked door



CRITICISM

● **"I had great fun playing this. The whole idea of the game is very original, and extremely interesting to play. If you want a fast action game, then you won't like *TSAM* as it requires lots a brain work and a considerable amount of note making. The menu system of choosing your options is easy to get used to and is very quick to use. The graphics, during the robbery, are very smooth and detailed. Definately one for those cold winter evenings! And much safer than the real thing (I would think!)"**

● *"Generally I really dislike this sort of game as there is often little or no fun involved in playing them. TSAM* however has been written and presented in such a way that even mere mortal arcade freaks can actually play it and enjoy it. The first part is a bit boring, flicking through masses of information windows can get very tedious if you haven't really got into the sprit of the game. The second robery stage really is good fun. You've got to be on the ball at all times. Go and buy it."

● "Gosh, this game is good! The windowing system is superbly done, and the whole game is definitely one that has been put together very well indeed. The idea is a good one, and one that I can't say I've seen before. Presentation is of a very high calibre, and playability wise, I find it hard to fault. Colourful, and graphically very good, *TSAM* is pleasant on both the eyes and the brain. I usually dislike strategy games, but this one is certainly well worth while. I like it."

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable: up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: fine
Use of colour: rather restrained
Graphics: lacks detail
Sound: negligable
Skill levels: one
Screens: five large buildings
General rating: an inovative game

Use of computer	89%
Graphics	56%
Playability	85%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	88%
Value for money	84%
Overall	85%

THE EIDOLON

Producer: Activision
Retail Price: **£7.99**

More than a hundred years ago, Dr Josef Agon started experimenting into his own subconscious. The end result of these experiments was a strange machine called The Eidolon. Seated in this contraption he would venture into the innermost reaches of his psyche, and confront the hidden perils which resided there. However, Agon's experiments were shrouded in mystery, and he became a reclusive figure, living out the last years of his life holed up in his mansion and never seen.

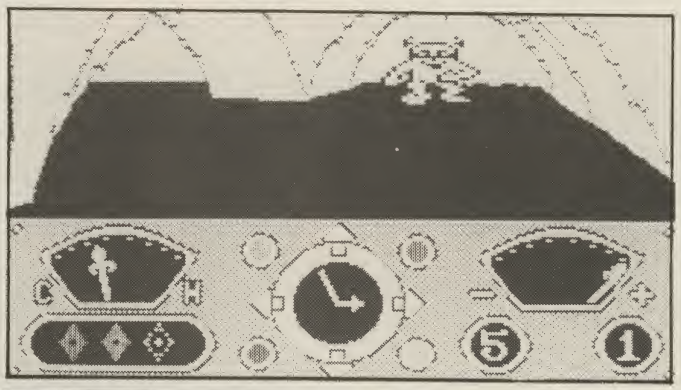
A hundred years later his mansion remains the same, untouched since the good doctor's mysterious disappearance. However, whilst walking home one night you see that the mansion's rusted gates are open and that a strange light is emitting from within. As you start to explore the house you find the old Eidolon machine, and by its side is the Doctor's diary. Plagued with curiousity, you open the dusty volume and discover the secrets of the Eidolon.

The Eidolon is a spherical vehicle just big enough for a man to sit in. When in operation, it floats on the mind's energy waves. It is equipped with a multi-purpose catcher/cannon, which is used to blast any monster you might encounter, and also to collect the many energy jewels which float in your mind. To begin with, The Eidolon transports you to the first of the seven cave systems which comprise your mind. The machine can be guided through this system, searching out the perils within. At the bottom of the screen is the Eidolon's instrument panel. The top half of the screen shows the view as seen through the cockpit window. Three dimensional graphics depict the arched roof of the caverns as the action moves towards you.

Each level has an exit, but this is guarded by a monster. The key to this exit must be taken, and the monster annihilated by a quick blast from the energy bolts you carry. Then, the next level can be loaded from tape. The higher the level, the more difficult it becomes to kill these monsters.

Various things must be collected during your travels if you are to progress right up to the seventh level of your subconscious. Energy spheres boost the flagging power levels of your Eidolon. If you are close enough to an object, a diamond shaped force-field will appear. This signifies that The Eidolon can capture the object with the collector/discharger situated on its roof. Blue spheres freeze time, thus allowing you a longer roam around the caverns. When these blue fireballs are fired at a creature, it also freezes, and you gain extra time to consider the best way to destroy it.

The controls in the Eidolon are suitably Victorian in appearance. There is a hot/cold indicator which tells you how close The Eidolon is to a monster. Gem indicators show how many gems you have stolen from the guardians. There is a clock to the centre of the control board, showing how long you have been exploring your subconscious. The energy level shows how much of a pounding The Eidolon has taken from the monsters, and the digits at the bottom of the dashboard show how much time remains before you must return to the real world.



A really cute troll down amongst the tunnels; you know what you gotta do — blast the living daylights out of him

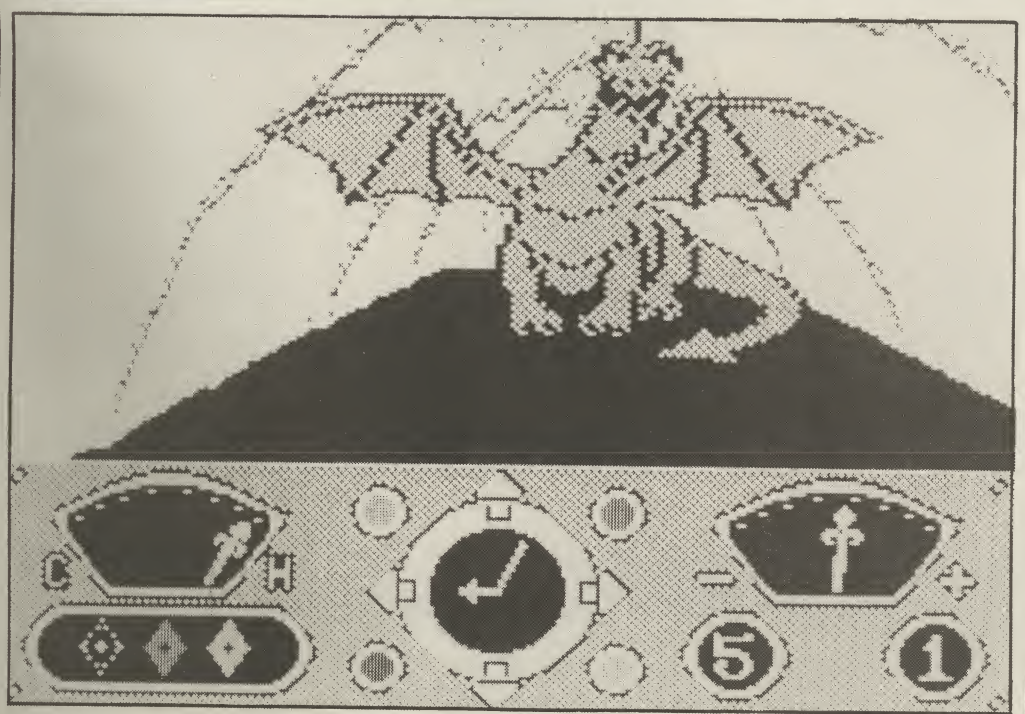
CRITICISM

● **"This is just one of those games which doesn't really work on the Spectrum and that's a shame because the original concept is simply brilliant. The real problem lies in that *Eidolon* relies heavily on both colour and sound which on the Spectrum aren't exactly all that flexible. Hence we have a black 'n' white *Eidolon*, rendering the game slightly dull in places. Its saving grace is the fact that it is quite fast, speeding up what could have otherwise been a rather dull and uninteresting game."**

● *"It's here and it's even faster than all the other versions (so you can hassle all your mates about having slow computers), but alas more than this I can't say. I found it tremendously difficult to actually get into the game and to play it successfully, perhaps after a large amount of practise it will grow on me but I'm not really prepared to play a game that annoys me for longer than I have to. The game has superb graphics save one thing, colour, this is understandably but drastically lacking. The sound is very good, there are a few effects during the game and a lovely tune on the title screen."*

● "Wowee! The graphics on this are really something! The fractal effect on Rescue was limited, to say the least, but on the Eidolon, Activision have really let go. The effect of cavernous walls is quite claustraphobia-inducing, if that adjective can be applied to a Spectrum game. *Eidolon* is fairly playable, and addictive, dependent on whether the game style appeals to you or not."

A nasty big dragon near the end of the first level; he's guarding a crystal, so get blasting



COMMENTS

Control keys: up Q; down Z; left 9; right 0; fire N, M, CAPS, SYMBOL-SHIFT; choose crystal 1-4; capture fireball/jewels X-B; pause P
Joystick: Kempston, Interface 2
Keyboard play: pretty good
Use of colour: mainly monochrome
Graphics: large and well animated
Sound: tune and spot effects
Skill levels: seven
Screens: loads
General rating: nice try at converting a game that was never suitable for the Spectrum

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	78%
Playability	75%
Getting started	71%
Addictive qualities	75%
Value for money	74%
Overall	**76%**

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FAT WORM

blows a sparky

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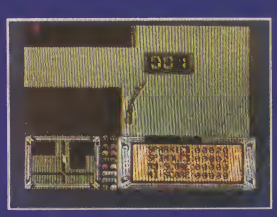

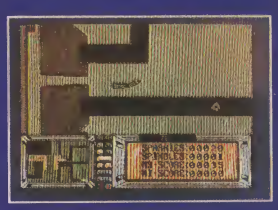

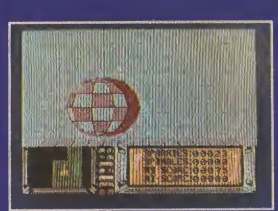

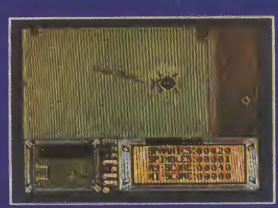

DURELL

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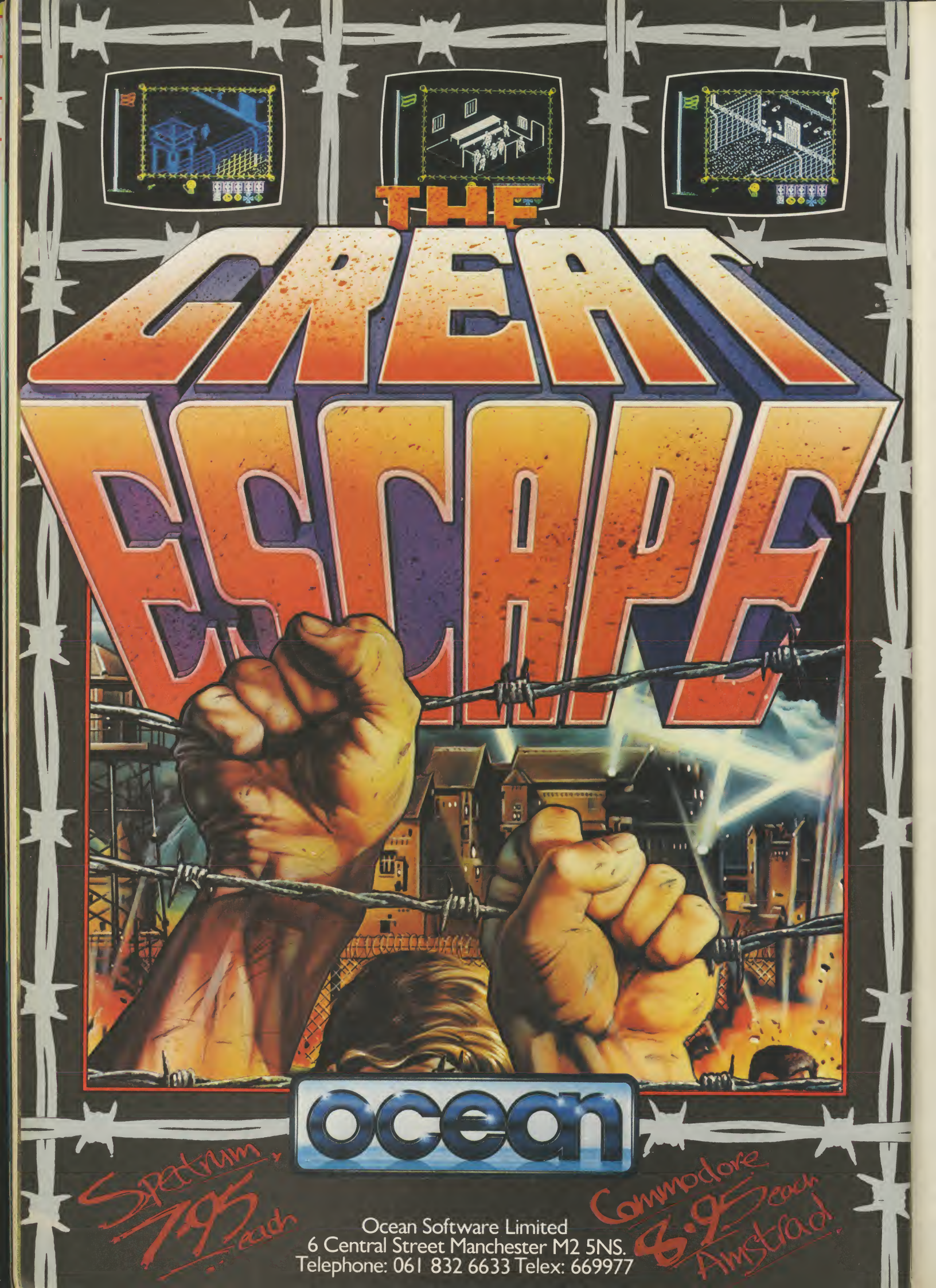
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FUTURE KNIGHT

Producer: Gremlin Graphics
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Shaun Hollingworth, Greg Holmes, Chris Kerry, Pete Harrap**

Although our story is set many years in the future, the noble art of chivalry is not dead. This is just as well as the ship in which Amelia is travelling has crashlanded on planet 2749/2 of the Zragg system, and worse still, the fair Amelia has been abducted by the dastardly Spegbott. Guarded by the grotesque Henchdroid in Spegbott's castle, Amelia's life is in mortal peril.

Randolf, a professional hero and Future Knight, receives a distress call from the wrecked S.S Rustbucket requesting his help immediately. But when Randolf reaches the crashed ship he finds that he has quite a mission on his armour-plate. Of course, for the love of Amelia he is willing to risk life and limb - cor, they don't make them like that anymore!

There are twenty levels to Randolph's mission. Firstly, the Future Knight has to hack his way through the ruined space ship out on to the planet surface. Once there he must make his way to Spegbott's castle and locate the alluring Amelia. However, in each main level there are multiple sub-levels. Each of these sub-levels has two doors, and Randolf must fight his way from one door to the other greeting each foe in his path with zeal.

Randolf starts out each life with 999 units of energy. Each time he's caught by one of Spegbott's henchmen, this level goes down by a certain amount. When this level reaches zero, then Randolf loses one of his three lives. A bomb, if picked up, will not only rid the screen of all aliens, but will also boost your Knight's energy. When all three lives have been used up the game is over, and Amelia will be left to the dastardly devices of the evil Spegbott.

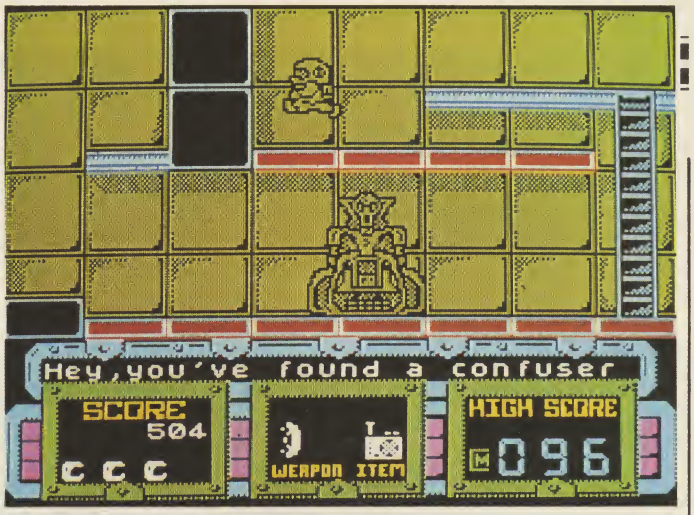
However, the baddies don't get it all their own way. Randolf has a very nifty gun built into his space suit which is very handy for blasting the baddies. This gun can be changed for another by visiting the ship's armoury. These guns have infinite blasting power, so Randolf can go forth and be very destructive if he likes.

Randolf is a bit of an exhibitionist. If you ignore him for a period of time, then the little Knight starts waving at you to attract your attention. If you refuse to continue the game he starts doing a little dance to amuse himself. If you still take no notice then he starts going totally berserk and spinning around on the spot.

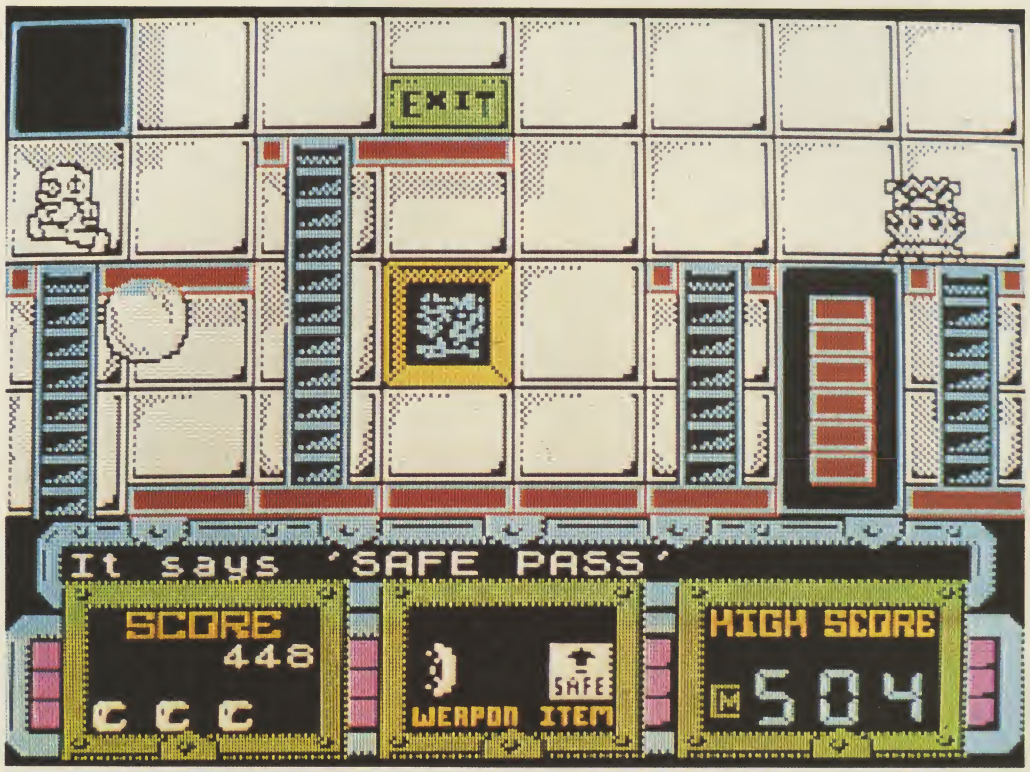
There are other useful objects which Randolf can collect to help him with his mission. These range from confusers, which do exactly what their name suggests, to various spells which will build bridges and extra exits.

CRITICISM

● **"I'm not very sure about this game. It was actually great fun for a while as I leapt around the platforms fighting nasties. However, there are some niggly problems. For a start off climbing up certain ladders just lead off onto the screen above - fine, except when you don't want to go to the screen above. Generally, I can't really put my finger, there's something about it that I'm not too keen on and I would recommend that you have a look at this before investing the old crinky stuff."**



On to the second level, is the confuser just picked up going to be any help tackling the demon?



Cameron gets a safe pass, but the score is draining away fast

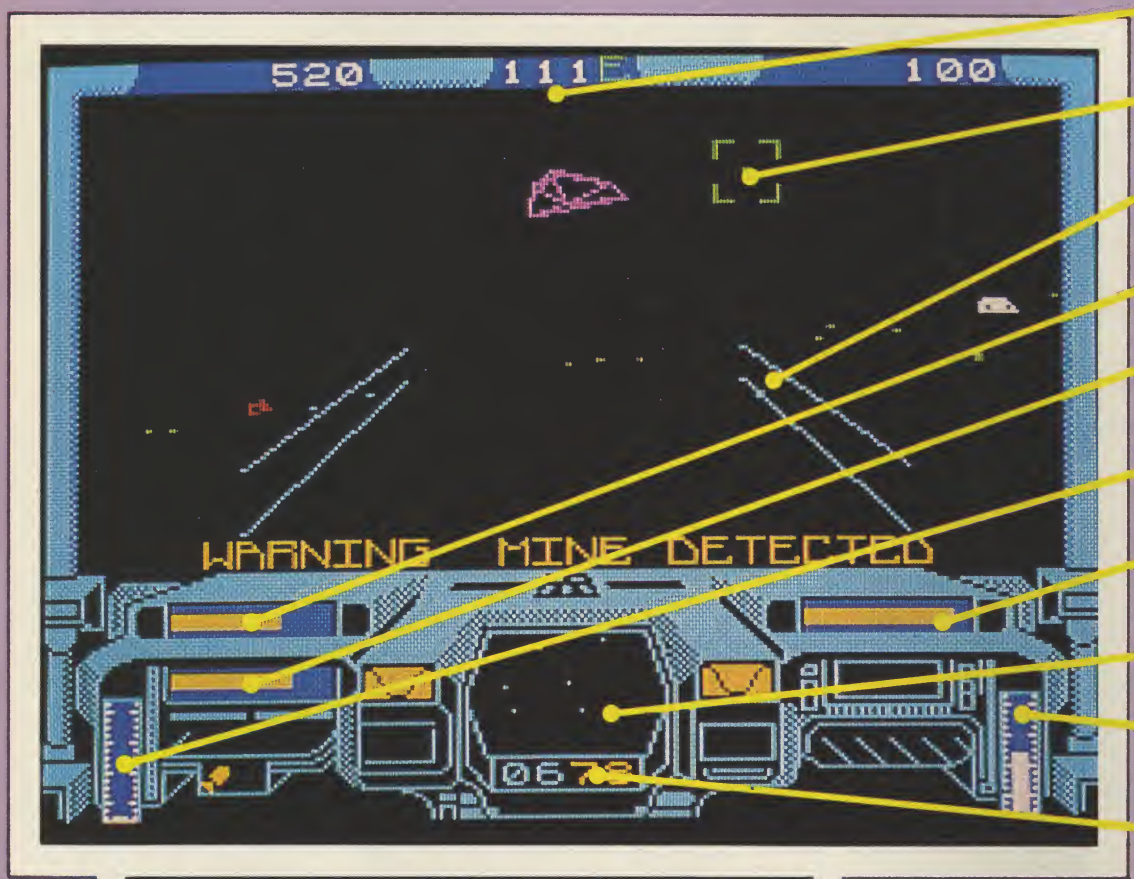
● *"This isn't perhaps the most original of games but it is good fun all the same. Legging it around the largish playing area trying to get out does get extremely frustrating after a couple of goes as it is very difficult to actually die, but you can get trapped in small spaces, so you have to about the game. The graphics are very good, each of the characters is very well drawn and animated and the backgrounds are colourful. The sound is also good, there are a few effects during the game and a lovely tune on the title screen. Future Knight isn't the best game around at the moment but it is certainly well worth a look."*

● "I tried to look at this with as open a mind as possible, bearing in mind **GREMLIN'S** past record, but unfortunatly, I was somewhat disappointed. The graphics are very good, and well up to the usual high standard of **GREMLIN**, but unfortunatly, the game struck me as being a very run of the mill one. The most enjoyable thing that I found about it was the way in which you characters stops, knocks on the screen, and starts dancing if you leave him alone for too long a period of time. Of course, if you like this sort of game, then I think you'll be OK."

COMMENTS

Control keys: left Q; right W;up P;down L; Fire SPACE; use, U; abort, BREAK
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: pretty slick
Use of colour: effective
Graphics: detailed with good shading
Sound: nice tune if you play it on the 128, a bit beepy on the 48K
Skill levels: one
Screens: 160
General rating: not up to Gremlin's usual standards

Use of computer	79%
Graphics	80%
Playability	76%
Getting started	77%
Addictive qualities	73%
Value for money	74%
Overall	**76%**



THE COMPASS
Gives the AGAV's heading

LASER SIGHT
Floats as the AGAV is moved

LASER FIRE
Two bolts of light flash towards the doomed Bute fighter

LASER ENERGY
Topped up at depots: no energy, no firing!

SHIELDS
Depleted by enemy fire and replenished at depots

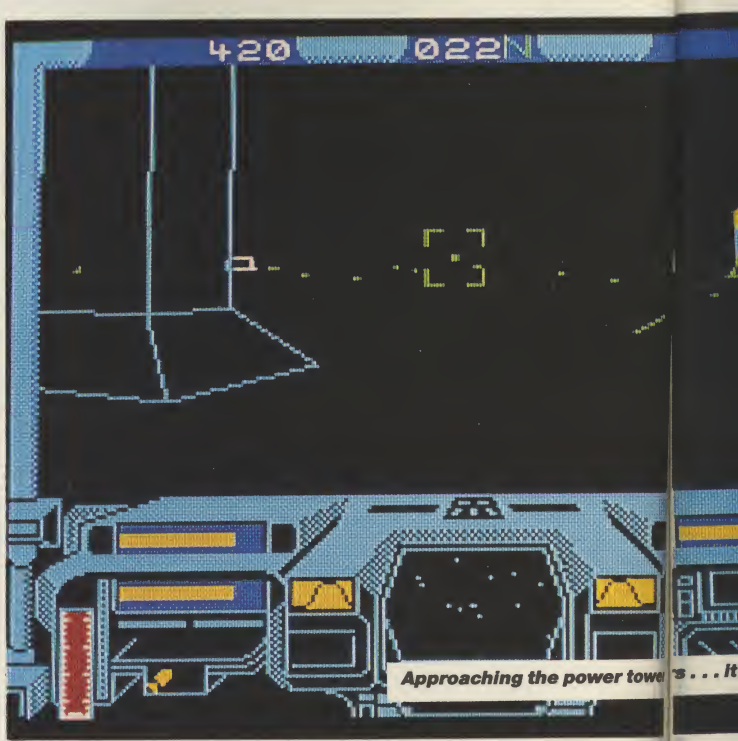
ALTITUDE
Flashes when dangerously low

PLASMA ENERGY
The AGAV's fuel; replenished at the power lines

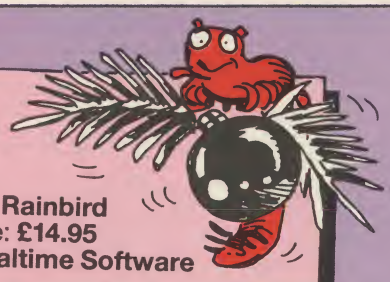
RADAR
Gives the position of all objects near the ship

SPEED
. . . keep it low while docking

CO-ORDINATES
This gives the ship's precise position



Approaching the power towe . . . It



Producer: Rainbird
Retail Price: **£14.95**
Author: **Realtime Software**

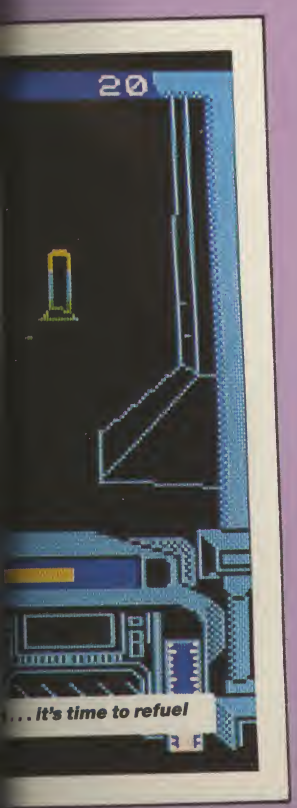
S·T·A·R·G·L·I·D·E·R

A CRASH Smash

For many years, the planet of Novenia was at peace. An automated defence system, called the Sentinels, kept unwelcome callers from outer space at bay. These huge monoliths didn't ask questions — they just blew away anything that they didn't like the look of.

All went well until the Sentinels destroyed a harmless flock of protected interplanetary migratory birds called Stargliders. The Sentinels were immediately reprogrammed not to blow these rather bizarre creatures to bits. Although ecologically sound, this produced a fatal flaw in the Novenian defence system — the ruthless Egrons attacked in ships disguised as Stargliders, thus fooling the defence computers. Once past the Sentinels, there was no stopping them. Novenia relied on the Sentinels and did not maintain any conventional forces. So Novenia was conquered.

Jason and Katra, two Sentinel repair workers, witnessed the death and destruction from the safety of one of Novenia's moons. The two heroes embark on a mission — to destroy the invading aliens singlehanded. All they have at their disposal is an obsolete museum piece of a fighter equipped with lasers and capable of carrying two missiles.



CRITICISM

" Starglider, without doubt, ranks amongst the best games to grace the Spectrum's screen. The whole of the game is excellently done, and its presentation and packaging has been executed in a most professional manner. The loading screen sets the player up for the game-of-the-year on any computer. If you've seen the Atari ST Starglider **then you'll be amazed at the Spectrum version because they're so alike! The sound effects are extremely good, and very effective. The number of frames of animation is unbelievable — it's just so smooth and incredibly fast. The options are vast and very useful. There's certainly a pot of gold at the end of the** RAINBIRD **(Eugh!). "**

There are more than sixteen different types of Egron craft to destroy and each craft must be dealt with in a slightly different way. The action takes place on the blasted wastes of what was once Novenia, and the antiquated fighter is guided around the dust-laden atmosphere using a co-ordinate system which divides the planet's surface into a grid of 100 units by 100 units.

Two types of sight are available — fixed and floating — and a choice is made before the game starts. Floating sights affect the control of the ship — the AGAV 'follows' the sights. Fixed sights remain in the centre of the screen, and the ship must be manoeuvred until the target appears in target square. An optional centering system may be enabled or disabled at the start of the game — automatic centering can be effected on either the vertical or the horizontal axis, in all directions, or not at all. With fully automatic centering, the fighter returns to flying straight and level when it is left to its own devices.

Two versions of the game have been programmed — the 'standard' 48K version and a much enhanced 128K/+2 version. The enhanced version includes digitised speech (the dulcet tones of one Clare Edgeley) a three-voice title tune and missions that either involve destroying an invader or picking up some extra bolt-on goodies for the fighter. Custom add-ons include super missiles with more fuel, power packs which temporarily dispense with the need to refuel, and a rear view mirror (presumably so that the ancient craft will pass its MOT!) In the enhanced version, particularly unpleasant meanies are encountered on the higher levels, to even out the advantage which the extra equipment gives.

At the start of the game, the airborne ground attack vehicle (AGAV) piloted by Jason and Katra is flying close to a repair depot. These depots are vital to the success of the mission. They rotate slowly, and the entry port on one side must be entered accurately, at low speed. Once inside, damage is repaired and a missile, if available, is attached to the craft. Each depot produces one missile every few minutes, but there is never more than one available each time the AGAV is docked. Before relaunching, the depot computer can be accessed for information on enemy craft.

After re-launching, it is vital to make a note of the co-ordinates of the depot so the AGAV can return when necessary. The only vital commodity not provided by the depots is energy — this has to be collected by using the inductive power lines which criss-cross the planet's surface (they can be recognised by the tall towers that support them.) Collecting power requires delicate manoeuvring, and there are usually plenty of meanies scattered around trying to stop the AGAV tanking up.

The AGAV's instrument panel includes horizontal bars that reveal the status of the shields, reserves of power and fuel levels, while two vertical indicators give the height and speed of the craft. The height bar flashes red if the craft is close to the ground and in danger of crashing — hitting the ground does the shields no good at all.

When a missile is fired, the view is supplied by a remote camera on board the missile. Missiles have a limited amount of fuel, fly very fast and have a wide turning circle. Consequently, a missile must be homed in on its target before the fuel runs out — so the target must be fairly close. Generally, there's not usually time to circle round and try again . . .

It takes three missile hits to destroy an Egron Starglider. As the AGAV can only carry two missiles at once you've got to go and find a depot with a missile ready, dock, and then find the Starglider again, even if you score two direct hits. The reward comes when an Egron Starglider is destroyed — an 'instant replay' of the moment of destruction appears on screen.

After 10,000 points have been scored, the game moves to the next level where the Egron craft take more hits before being destroyed. . . .

CRITICISM

" Wizz neeaw zoom! . . . Zap zap zap kapow! Budda budda budda. This really is my kind of game. It combines a fantastic shoot em up with a bit of brain work (but not as much as Starstrike II**). From the word go it is easy to get totally enthralled in the world of Novenia, especially if you read the 64 page novelette (if you can tear yourself away from the game!) I can see myself playing this for weeks. Graphically,** Starglider **is the best vector graphics game to date — my only niggle is that in a game of this quality it's a shame that no one's worked out a way of erasing objects and horizons that appear behind other objects. The sound is a bit disappointing: there are no tunes but the effects are well used. If you are a fan of shoot em ups or vector graphics then this must take pride of place in your software collection. Go and buy it, you won't regret it. "**

CRITICISM

" Wowee!! The last time I saw a game that made me go into the same sort of totally freaked-out ultra-amazed mode was Starstrike II**, also by** REALTIME**. This one is even better, to the extent that I don't think I can find fault with it. The animated vector graphics are just sooo great! The whole thing is destined to become a classic. I think I'd go as far as to say that if this was in the arcades, then I spend a fair bit of time throwing ten pences into it. If you're the not-so-proud owner of a 48K machine, then I suggest that you go and buy it now. If on the other hand, you've got a Plus 2, then buy this, and spend the rest of your existence playing it (until the follow up, anyway!) "**

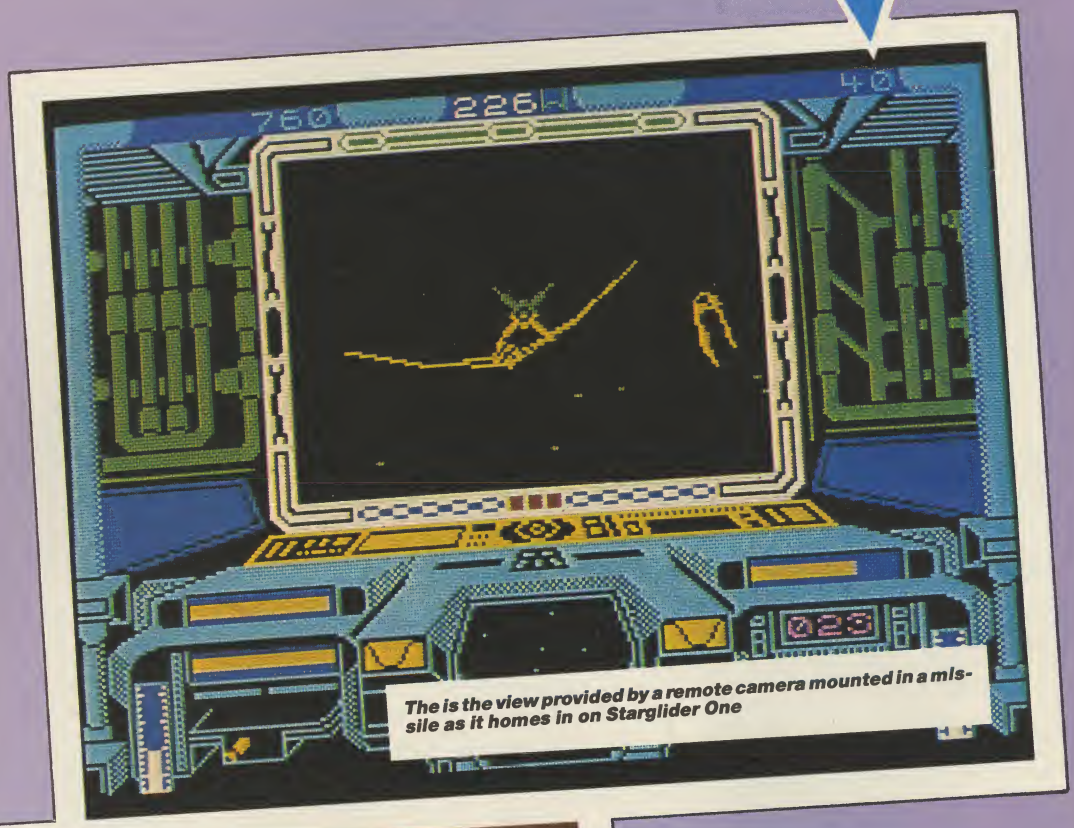
S·T·A·R·G·L·I·D·E·R

A CRASH Smash

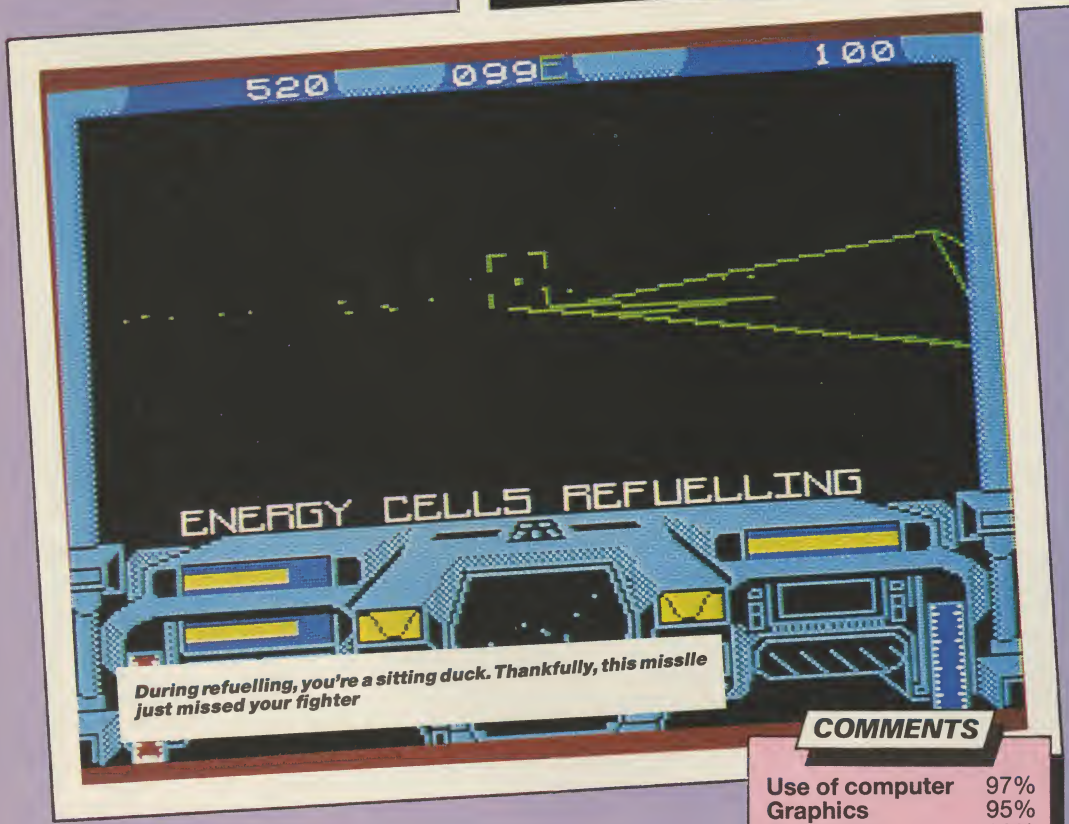
COMMENTS

Control keys: redefinable: up, down, left, right, accelerate, decelerate, launch missile, fire, pause. (128K version only: launch super missile)
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: slick
Use of colour: helpful
Graphics: incredible speed and animation
Sound: good effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: wraparound play area
General rating: It's hard to imagine a better shoot em up

Use of computer	96%
Graphics	95%
Playability	95%
Getting started	94%
Addictive qualities	96%
Value for money	92%
Overall	**95%**



The is the view provided by a remote camera mounted in a missile as it homes in on Starglider One



During refuelling, you're a sitting duck. Thankfully, this missile just missed your fighter

COMMENTS

Use of computer	97%
Graphics	95%
Playability	96%
Getting started	94%
Addictive qualities	98%
Value for money	95%
Overall	**97%**

The 128K version represents quite an enhancement on the 48K game. It deserves a separate critical comment and a revised set of ratings

CRITICISM

"Starglider on the 128K is far far superior to the 48K version and indeed to any other 128K games that I've seen to date. I had difficulty believing that a humble (but fat) Spectrum could actually produce a game this fast and with so many sound effects. Graphically, this is no step forward from the 48K, except that you get a few more nasties on higher levels. The sound is the best that I have ever heard on a Spectrum: there is an excellent David Lowe tune on the title screen and some worthy effects during play. Above all, there is speech the like of which has never been heard before on the Spectrum (it even knocks the stuffing out of the Atari ST version). The voice is recognisably that of nice Clare Edgeley from RAINBIRD who actually gives you useful bits of information (like when you are going to die) during the game. If you are a 128K owner who's getting a bit fed up 'cos there isn't really any neat software around for your machine this will restore your faith. Halleluja!"

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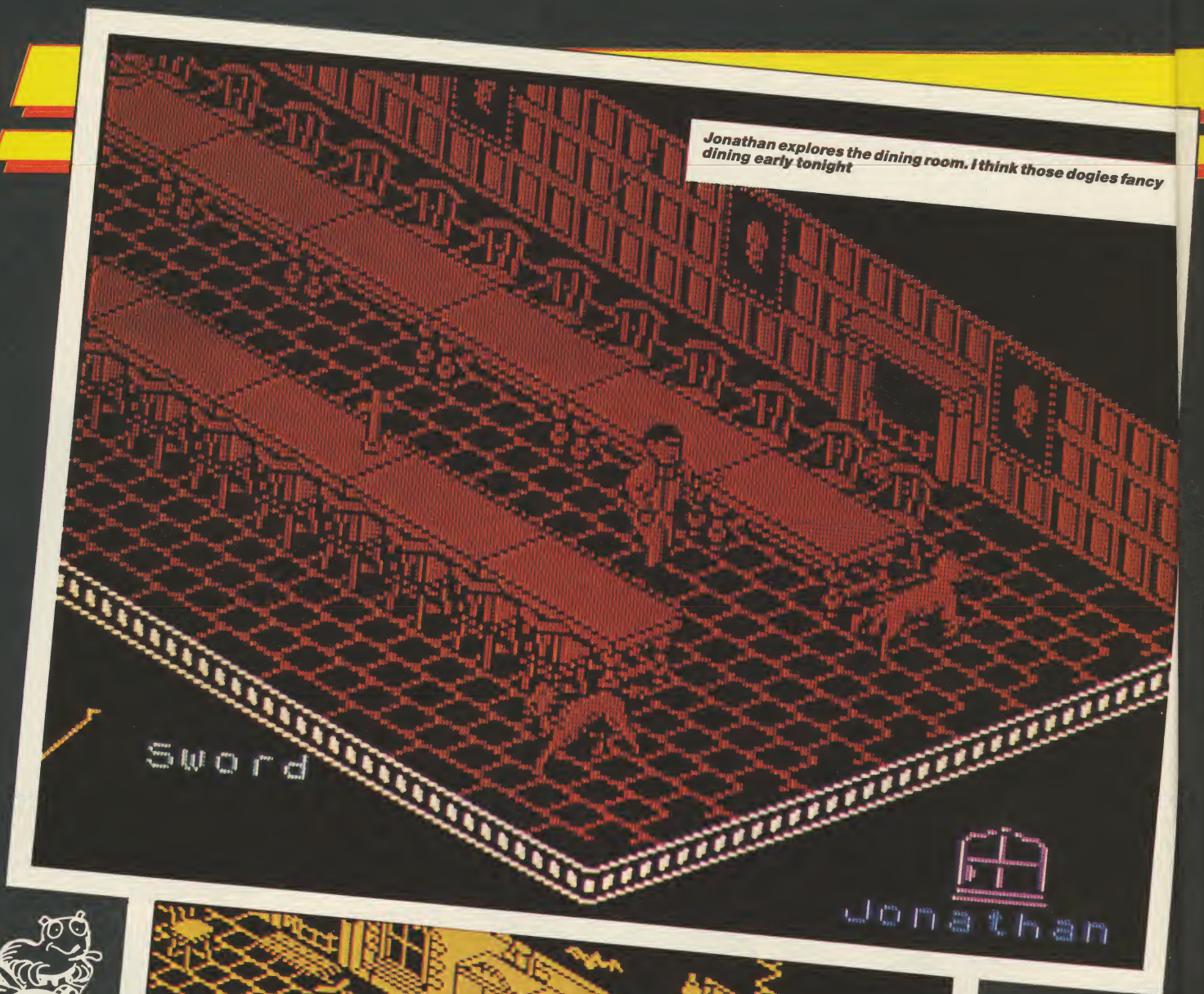
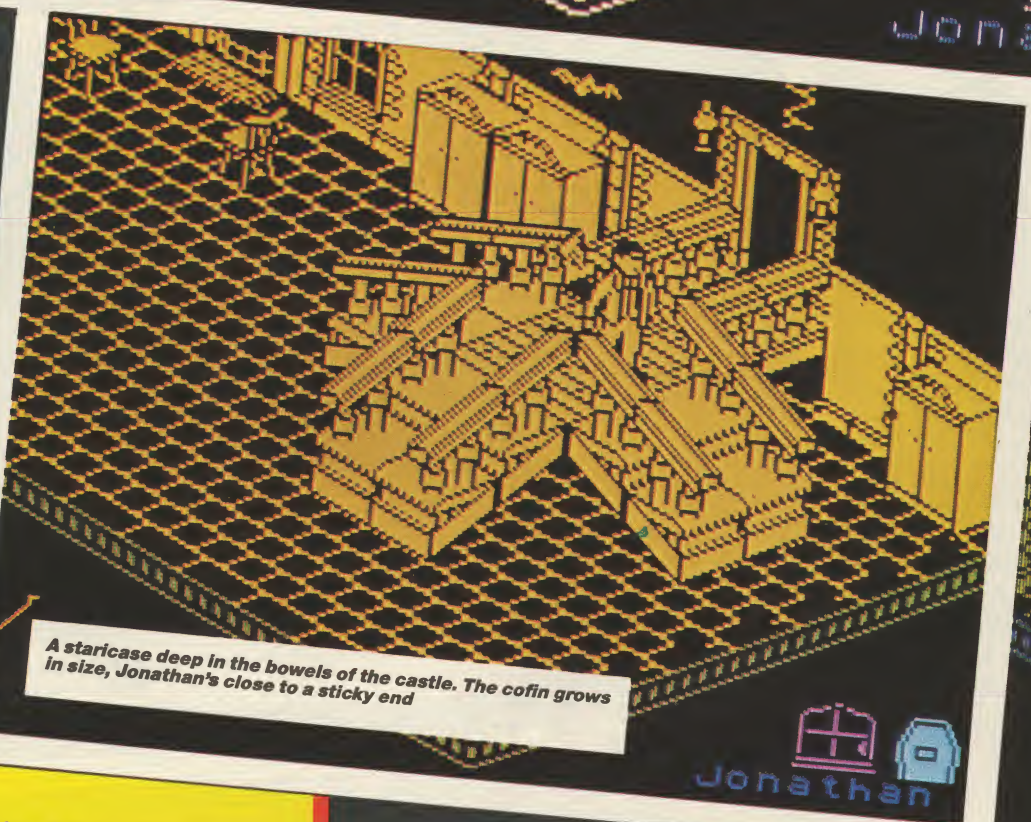
WHSMITH WHSMITH

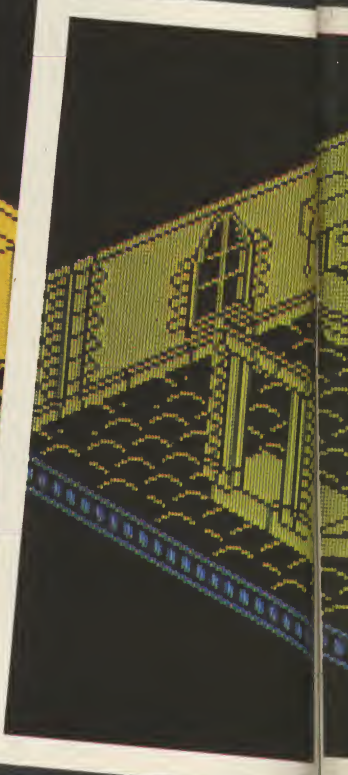
Subject to availability



Jonathan explores the dining room. I think those dogies fancy dining early tonight



A staricase deep in the bowels of the castle. The cofin grows in size, Jonathan's close to a sticky end



Producer: Piranha
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Design Design**

N·O·S·F·E·R·A·T·U

A CRASH Smash

Nosferatu The Vampyre has been dragged out, dusted down and brought up to date. Those who remember the Twentieth Century Fox film of the same name will know that Nosferatu was the only Vampyre to have his deadly fangs firmly in the front of his mouth, and not at the side like the Bela Lugosis and Peter Cushings that were to follow.

Nosferatu is divided into three sections, and predictably enough one section has to be completed before the player can progress to the next. The first part of the game takes place in Dracula's castle. Jonathan Harker is an estate agent's minion. The Count wishes to move from his drafty house on the hill. When Jonathan gets to the castle, his worst fears are realised. Being a smart man, he realises that if Nosferatu moves into the peaceful town of Wismar, the inhabitants of this sleepy village could soon become his unwitting victims and turn into Vampyres themselves, Eeek!

Unfortunately, Jonathan has made a slight faux-pas. He has left the deeds to the house on the dining table in the Count's castle, and when he returns they are gone. Mr. Harker must recover these deeds and escape from the Count's castle to complete section one of the game.

Apart from Nosferatu, there are other nasty things for the poor man to wrestle with. Vampyre bats, sewer rats and large rabid wolves are all a potential threat as they guard the castle while the Count takes his beauty sleep. These creatures will sap away Jonathan's life energy if they make contact with him. This life force is represented by an ever-growing coffin at the bottom of the screen, when the coffin is completed he dies. Apart from these creatures, the Count has also conjured up hallucinations which haunt and trick Jonathan as he stumbles around the castle's rooms in search of the deeds.

Food can be picked up along the way to replenish his energy, and the crucifixes, swords and candles which can also be picked up all help to make his task a mite easier. The time of day or night is shown by a change in room colours and by a chart at the bottom of the screen. It is not essential for Jonathan to have the deeds before he leaves the castle, but if he does have them it will make his task a lot easier in the next section

In level two the action takes place in the town of Wismar and the player controls three characters; Jonathan Harker again, his wife Lucy and a chap called van Helsing. Play can be switched between the three by using keys 1 through to 3.

Nosferatu has been lured to Wismar by Lucy's unique powers of attraction. While in the town he takes good advantage of the healthy population and begins to feed off them. However, unbeknown to Lucy's husband and van Helsing, she is the only one who can kill Nosferatu. This makes things tricky in the third section. The two men must make short work of the hundreds of sewer rats which swarm around, while at the same time fending off the inhabitants who have already been turned into Vampyres by the Count.

In section three the player controls just Lucy. The object of this level is to lure Nosferatu to Lucy's house for the Final Conflict. Jonathan and van Helsing are still unaware that Lucy alone can kill the Vampyre and are united in keeping her away from danger. The two men must be locked in the house while Nosferatu is lured to Lucy's bedroom where she must keep him with her until dawn. If you are sucessful, the game ends with Nosferatu's quick demise at the first rays of the sun!

CRITICISM

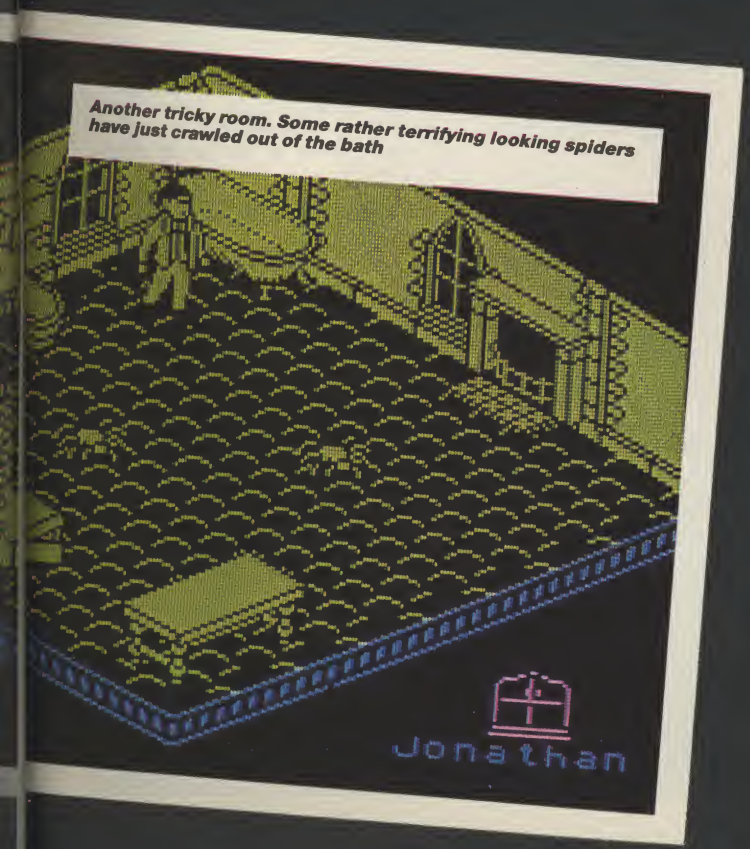
"This really is a very good game. The graphics are very detailed and originally drawn. Things like the bats and other animals are extremly well animated — which makes *Nosferato* a very pretty game to play — but there is much more than meets the eye, like trap doors and secret passages, which once found open the whole game up. The game is very easy to get into, although I felt the controls were a touch unresponsive, considering the bats move at such a fast pace. After a very hard session of playing I found it very hard to get anywhere near level two. The options are fairly vast, although the old game option proved pretty useless. This is an excellent variant on an old game."

CRITICISM

"Although bearing inital similarities to DESIGN DESIGN'S **earlier release, *Nexor*, the gameplay goes much beyond the simple wander around and collect object idea. The plot is actually very involved and complex. What's more, it's a real toughie to play. The most notable occurance of this is when the bats attack you - really go for your neck, the little horrors! Despite not be able to get very far into the games I'm sure I'll play it again as there appears so much just waiting to be discovered. I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone."**

CRITICISM

"To begin with it is very easy to dismiss *Nosferatu* as just another filmation game with hardly any content, but if you stick with it for a few goes I'm sure that it will absorb you as completely as it did me. Graphically this has to be one of the most detailed games that I have ever played, nothing has been left out. The characters move around in the usual excellent filmation fashion and use of colour is understandably limated. The sound is also very good with lots of effects and a lovely tune on the title screen. All in all I'm glad to see that PIRANAH **can still produce excellent games."**



Another tricky room. Some rather terrifying looking spiders have just crawled out of the bath

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: somewhat slugish
Use of colour: understandably limited
Graphics: detailed with good animation
Sound: tune which can be switched on or off during play
Skill levels: three
Screens: 113
General rating: love at first byte

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	93%
Playability	92%
Getting started	87%
Addictive qualities	92%
Value for money	91%
Overall	**91%**

SPACE HARRIER

Producer: Elite
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Keith Burkhill**

Anyone who is remotely familiar with amusement arcades will have heard of *Space Harrier*. In fact so imposing is this arcade machine that it would be very difficult to miss. The arcade version incorporates a huge hydraulic arm on which is mounted a seat and a video screen. Apparently it's quite an experience to play. Unfortunately the Spectrum version doesn't include such fancy sundries.

You control a futuristic soldier, a Space Harrier, who is pitting his witts against all manner of nasty aliens who are threatening to take over. One man against so many seems a fairly tall order. Your soldier is equipped with a jet pack and a powerful gun. This enables him to rocket about at great speeds while blasting away at the opposition.

The basic idea is to blast anything that hurtles towards your character from the back of the screen, whether it's a mean and ugly nasty or the odd bit of countryside. The person perspective action scrolls towards the player at a fair old rate. All the aliens zoom in from the far distant horizon and your soldier has to swoop and duck around blasting them out of the skies. Apart from the many monsters there are also landscape features that have to be avoided. Trees, rocks and large stone obelisks shoot out to meet you and then must be manoeuvred around if success is to be yours.

There are sixteen levels to the game. Each one is identified by it's distinctive colouring and different graphics. In the later levels the action gets quite furious with inanimate objects hurling at you. The Space Harrier must blast his/her way through all the nasties on a particular level, amassing the biggest score possible. At the end of each level there is a super baddie or baddies who must be conquered before your little soldier sets his feet down on the ground again and awaits the perils of the next level.

Although the majority of the demons in this game are nasty there is an exception. If you get up to level ten, a cute cuddly dragon appears who is obviously very friendly. When he appears in the later levels your Space Harrier gets to ride on his back and together they wreak havock on the attacking monsters. Gone is his powerful laser and the Harrier and his dragonesque mate simply drive into the approaching monsters and destroy them that way. In fact, huge bonus scores can be achieved on this level

Your Space Harrier has nine lives in the game. One of these is lost every time he gets shot by one of the monsters. For those that know the Arcade version intimately, the ending is along the same lines.

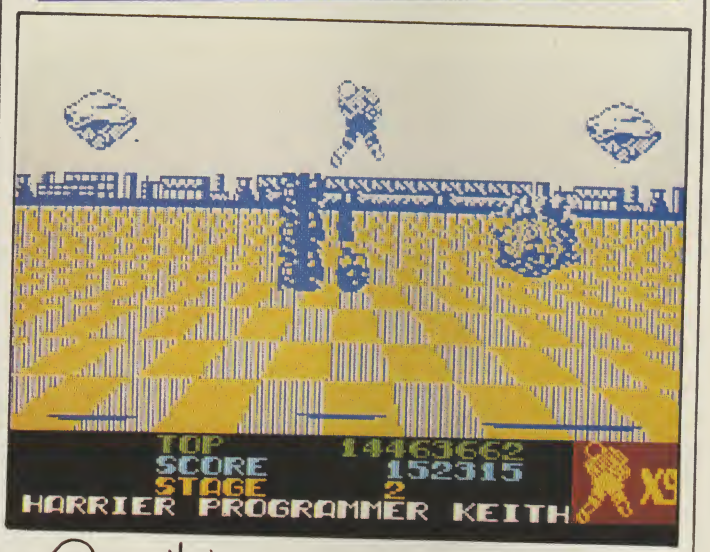
CRITICISM

● **"Wow! This game moves at a pace! The first level is fairly easy, but even that's hectic first time through, but as you start to clock levels, things really do start getting fast. The score table gave me a massive shock the first time I saw it, but I was fairly pleasantly surprised when my scores went into seven figures after ten minutes playing. Although it's quite easy, *Space Harrier* isn't the worst** ELITE **conversion, and though being far from the best, might be worth considering if you're a big fan of the arcade version."**

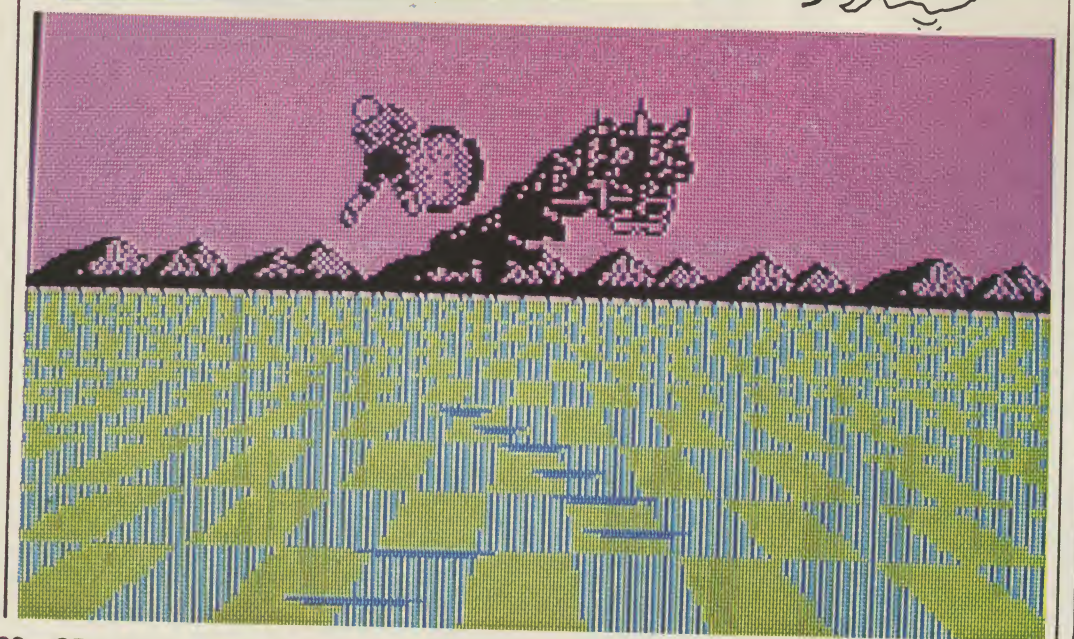
● *"The graphics on the arcade version were always what people talked about — but the Spectrum version has tried to make them too detailed, and the result looks very messy indeed. I found that it was very hard to see what was coming up the screen at you — and the difference between the missiles and obstacles was very little when moving at such a speed as it does. To me the Spectrum version shows how little actual game is in* Space Harrier. *I got very bored with it after only a few games. As far as I'm concerned,* **Elite** *can give the seat away with it, and I still wouldn't buy the game."*

● "I really liked *Space Harrier* in the arcades but only because the machine itself jerked around on hydraulics so you got a really good sense of motion when you moved about on screen (experience not to be no. 346). This is not at all a bad version of the original, it plays at high speed and it is quite compelling. The graphics are well above average but they do tend to get a little messy at times. Your character is well drawn but I feel that he could have a few more poses to complete the flying effect. The sound is averageish, there are no tunes and the effects are mediocre only. This is yet another good shoot'em up this issue seem to be full of them (horay!).

in stage two, the scenery changes to a city scape, but the action is still fast and furious



Facing up to the dragon at the end of stage one; a pretty tricky opponent



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable, up, down, left, right, fire
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: pretty damn fast
Use of colour: vivid
Graphics: amazing perspective effect
Sound: the occasional spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: sixteen scrolling arenas
General rating: a near miss

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	78%
Playability	76%
Getting started	76%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	72%
Overall	77%

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Producer:CRL
Retail Price: **£8.95**
Author: **Colin Ajayi-Obe**

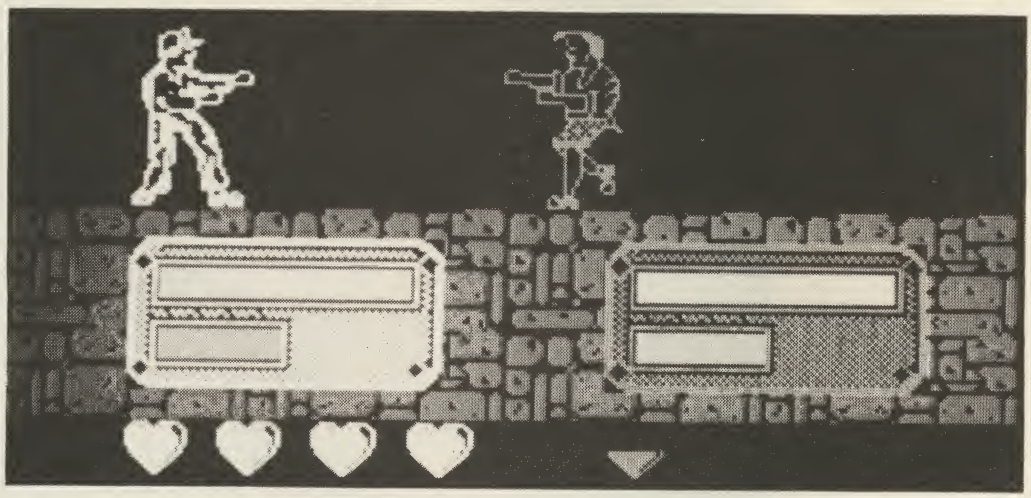
A conference between all the super powers is being held on the planet Therop. However, the sneaky Theropi, have plans for Galactic domination and have subjected the Earth Members to the Theropi's irreversible Brain Drain machine. They have been turned from loyal Earthlings into lethal exterminators working for the Theropi. However, there is one survivor from the Theropi's dastardly plans. Major R A Trooper, Squad Captain, has somehow avoided the Theropi, and now stands alone in a bid to stop their evil plans.

The Major, must exterminate the brainwashed Members, and escape from the planet alive. The parts of his spaceship have been scattered all over the planet's surface, so before he can even contemplate waving bye-bye to Therop, he must collect all these pieces and assemble his craft again. There are a certain number of pieces of the ship per sector. Each piece must be collected before he progresses to the next.

If Major Trooper encounters one of the green Members, he must fight them at unarmed combat, the screen automatically flips into combat mode. The action zooms in on the two fighters, and shows them greatly enlarged and in much finer detail on the screen. Using the relevant keys or joystick positions, Major Trooper has to high-kick and punch his way to victory by draining his opponent's energy and stamina. However, the Major has to watch out for his own reserves. There are two bars on the Combat screen. The blue one showing the Major's energy and the magenta one showing his stamina. The idea is to get the opponent's energy and stamina down to zero. However, if the Member gets the better of the Major, then he loses one of his lives. These lives are displayed at the bottom of the screen as hearts, and are gradually eaten away as the Major's energy is lost. When a Member has been destroyed, the Major can then progress in the game. The screen then returns to the normal view, showing the characters and background in quite small detail.

Apart from the Members, the Major also has to fight against the Theropi, natives of this strange planet. These small yellow blob like creatures can only be destroyed by shooting them. They knock over our hero and drain his energy. The planet Therop is composed of sheer cliffs and large drops into huge valleys. The Major does possess quite good jumping abilities, but some of the cliffs are just too much for him. When he comes across one of these he must find some rope and tackle. Other objects can be picked up and put into the Major's pockets. These can then be used by selecting the relevant pocket.

The combat screens, the Major has to resort to a bit of GBH



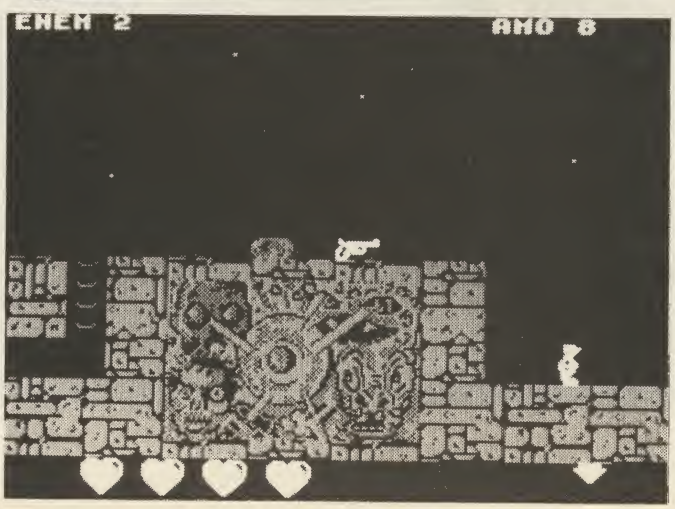
CRITICISM

● **"I really do wish CRL would make their mind up. *Academy* is, without doubt, superb, but *Dr. What* and this one, well, a different matter entirely! The graphics of the fighting characters are excellenrt, big and well animated. There is no doubt inmy mind that the game would be vastly improved if the wasted arcade adventure part was scrapped, and the memory used was put towards improvement of the combat section. Overall, the combat section has potential, but the opther part is a disaster."**

● *"This is the first 128K only Speccy game that I've seen, if the rest are of the same quality as this then I'll take back my old'n rusty 16K door stop Sinclair any day. C'mon CRL surely a +2 can do a little more than this. Graphically the overall effect is shoddy: small undetailed badly animated characters and a garish use of colour. The sound too is well below average for the 128K, there are a few average tunes and minimal use of sound effects. The game at first seems as if it could be fun but after a few plays it does get very boring."*

● "I was bemused with this game at first, but after some help from a colleague I got well into the game — I would have been stuck without him! As a game designed specifically for the +2 I was amazed to see that there is no Sinclair joystick option — you have to define the keys for the joystick — is this why it didn't get a Sinclair Quality Control sticker? The game contains some good features; such as throwing the rope and the dying effects.

Now how the heck do I get out of here. The start of **Trooper,** *and a tall problem*



COMMENTS

Control keys: definable; up, down, left, right, fire/punch, jump, flying kick/hold, high kick/pick up
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Sinclair
Keyboard play: hard to get the hang of at first
Use of colour: uninspired
Graphics: not much detail
Sound: nice tune at the beginning with spot effects throughout
Skill levels: one
Screens: 200
General rating: most 48k games are better than this

Use of computer	54%
Graphics	47%
Playability	47%
Getting started	53%
Addictive qualities	46%
Value for money	42%
Overall	**46%**

KAT TRAP

PLANET OF THE CAT-MEN

Kat Trap is the winner of the "Crash Magazine" 'Genesis' competition. This game was selected out of 4000 entries and has been programmed by the top rated Design Design team, (need we say more).

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FAIRLIGHT II: TRIAL OF DARKNESS

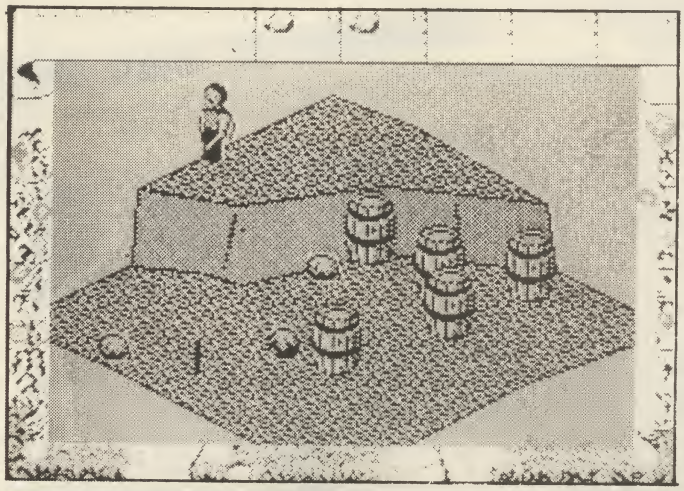
Producer: The Edge
Retail Price: **£9.95**
Author: **Bo Jangeborg**

About a year after the first *Fairlight* stormed the Spectrum games market, Bo Jangeborg and the team from THE EDGE have come up with the sequel.

The land of Fairlight has been decaying over many thousands of years, ever since the good King Avars who ruled over the land was murdered. When the King was slain, Fairlight slipped into the gloom and despair in which it is still trapped today. However, legend tells of a wizard who will one day be born to free the land from despair. In the original *Fairlight*, your character, Isvar was apparently called and told to seek out the book of Light which will help bring Fairlight back to its former glory. However, in the sequel it becomes apparent that you were cruely deceived. Instead of Sergar you in fact gave the Book of Light to the Dark Lord who can now harness its power to bring even more gloom and despair to the stricken land.

Bo Jangeborg has incorporated 3D graphics like *Fairlight*. Each object has its own mass, and obeys the laws of physics and gravity. For instance, heavier objects like large boulders take more effort to pick up than say, a small piece of food. Heavier objects will also travel less far when they are pushed than lighter ones. Isvar is informed in no uncertain terms if an object which he's trying to lift is actually too heavy.

Isvar is the character you play in *Fairlight II*. He must roam around the outside and inside of the Dark Tower, facing the foes and guards who are waiting to stop him in his mission. After all, if Isvar mucks things up this time as well, there may be no salvation for Fairlight.



Isvar is down in a pit. There must be some way to get out with all these barrels lying around

Once again, Isvar has five pockets which he can use to store useful objects in. Isvar starts out the game with 99 energy points and these are shown ticking down numerically by a counter at the top of the screen. Food will buck up his energy levels if they get too low.

Isvar must watch his step when he's trolling around the outside of the tower. Sheer cliffs shelve away into infinity. This power diminishes after encounters with dwarves, guards, killer wolverines and various other nasties who patrol the outside and inside the tower.

When Isvar leaves one location and moves on to another there is a short pause while the new location flashes, ready drawn onto the screen. Unlike the first version, the screen doesn't go black for a split second, but behaves more like a standard flick screen arrangement.

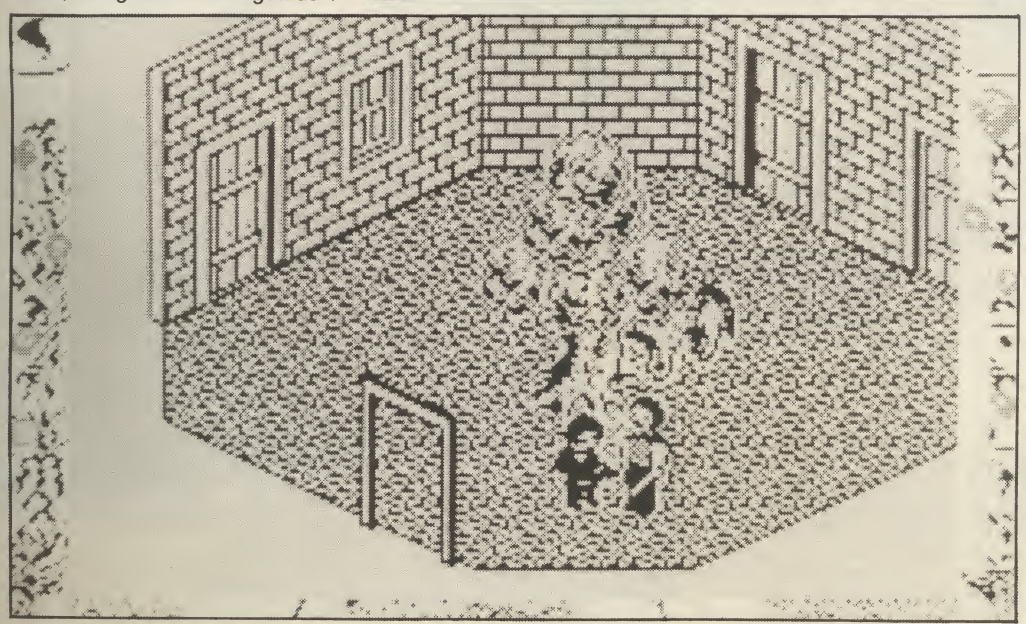
CRITICISM

● **"*Fairlight II* is far too much like the first game, and even though it is faster, the second game is quite boring to play after only a few games. Basically, I think that Fairlight only impressed me and many other people because of its extremly detailed graphics but the game is much too 'ard for the basic Spectrum owner (well me atleast!). The problems in *Fairlight II* are more obscure than the first and it takes much longer to get into than the first. A decent follow up to Fairlight, but nothing different.**

● *"I hated* Fairlight *so I can't really be expected to be over the moon about this, and to tell you the truth I'm not. As far as I can see this is no real step forward from the original, there is a larger playing area and the graphics are a lot more varied but not essentially prettier. The game plays in a very similar way to the stacks of other Filmation games although the way in which different objects behave is a cute touch. If you are a fan of Fairlight then no doubt this will appeal, if not then I'd stay well clear of this."*

● "Oooh! Look at these graphics! Bo Jangeborg is certainly capable of producing something worthwhile, as this more than proves. The only gripes that I've got are the time it takes to flick screens, and the speed with which the character moves when there are several moving items on screen. The inertia and differing gravities of objects varing in weight is finely produced, and the whole game is one that's well worth getting."

A courtyard within the tower. Despite lugging a barrel around, Isvar can still put the meanie to the sword



COMMENTS

Control keys: Y-P up and right, G-L down and left, Q-T up and left, A-G down and right, SYM/SPACE jump, B-M fight, X-V pick up, CAPS-Z drop, 1-5 select objects, 6-7 use selected object, SYM+**SPACE pause game**
Joystick: Kempston, but only to control the movements of Isvar, everything else must be carried out via the keyboard
Keyboard play: ard to get the hang of initially due to the number of keys used in the game, but very smooth once this has been overcome
Use of colour: monochrome
Graphics: fine detail
Sound: atmospheric tune at the beginning, but no sound during the actual game
Skill levels: one
Screens: 160
General rating: good, but nothing new

Use of computer	**88%**
Graphics	**92%**
Playability	**75%**
Getting started	**80%**
Addictive qualities	**80%**
Value for money	**82%**
Overall	**81%**

C·O·N·T·A·C·T

Sam gets carted off to the slammer to cool his feet for a while after the cops discover him slumped next to a corpse
CONTACT SAM CRUISE
Hi score 0
Score 38
Bucks 11

Sam sits in his office listening impassiv
information on the budgie case
CONTACT SAM CRUISE

A sticky end for Sam as the mob throw him off the roof. He should have chosen a better disguise when he dropped in on the bad guy's H.Q.
CONTACT SAM CRUISE
Hi score 0
Score 104
Bucks 73

MICROSPHERE
Contac
SAM C

S·A·M C·R·U·I·S·E

A CRASH Smash

It was just another day in the office. The sun was hot as it streamed in through the venetian blind, making zebra stripes on the desk. The whole city felt as if it was embalmed and I felt myself drifting off into an uneasy sleep. Suddenly I was awakened by the telephone ringing. It was a foxy dame called Lana. She wanted me to meet her on the top of the Hotel Royal. Said she had something important to tell me. Frankly the whole thing stank but doesn't everything in this line of work? I took my hat and coat and set off into those mean streets on the case of the Bali Budgie.

Microsphere, the people that brought you *Skool Daze* and *Back To Skool* has moved to the world of Raymond Chandler for its latest inspiration.

In the game Sam has to solve a case. By following clues and riddles along the way in true detective fashion he has to try and piece together the facts and solve the mystery. However, snipers and inevitable gangland heavies are out in force to get him. Unconcerned passers-by go about their day to day business as bullets whizz around from the hidden guns.

There are various ways in which Sam can fail in his mission such as running out of money or getting chucked off a very tall building by the Mafia. The Mafia may be fairly easy to avoid, but everything in this game coasts money, even walking around. The money acts as your energy level. Sam starts the game with 50 dollars in his pocket but funds can be topped up by somersaulting onto stray dollar bills which occasionally float along the sidewalks.

If Sam gets shot by a sniper, then Sam has to use a first aid kit. Eight of these are supplied at the beginning of the game and once they're gone then Sam will have to go to the hospital and the case will be over. He never actually gets fataly wounded enough to die, even when he goes flying off the top of a building on the end of a Mafiosa boot!

Buildings can be visited and actually walked around inside by Sam. The action inside the building is viewed through the windows blinds can be pulled down and lights switched on and off. If Sam is near a phone then the phone icon lights up on the table at the bottom of the main screen and he can make a call. He only has one phone number at the beginning of the game and phoning his office might provide him with some useful clues. Extra phone numbers can be collected by following up clues along the way.

If Sam gets framed during the game then the police will come along and arrest him. Like all good private detectives Sam carries a large array of disguises with him and if the police are hot on his trail then he can change into one of these at the press of a button. If the police get wise to one of the these disguises then the disguise icon will light up at the bottom of the screen at which point he's better think of something else to do. If he does get arrested the the police are usually satisfied with his claims of innocence and release him on bail.

Points are scored for the amount of time Sam manages to stay on the case. As his money icon goes down so his experience points go up. Useful clues and messages are scrolled along the table at the bottom of the screen and these will help sam along the way if he gets stuck.

CRITICISM

"Just when I thought *The Great Escape* was about as far as the arcade adventure could go, this comes along. More plot, better graphics, more atmosphere, more humour, in just about every department this game takes the biscuit as far as I'm concerned. The Chandleresque flavour is just about perfect, best played in a trilby with a packet of lucky strike and a glass of bourbon by your side, this is the next best thing to being Bogart. There are a heck of a lot of keys, and a keyboard overlay or an icon system might have been a big help. What I want to know is how MICROSPHERE **can follow this."**

CRITICISM

"About once a year MICROSPERE **bring out a game, but when they do appear, they are something to look forward to. *Contact Sam Cruise* is graphically in the *Skool Daze* style, but the atmosphere is very eerie and gangster-like. As soon as Sam Cruise's first messages appeared on the screen, I was sure that something good was coming up. The graphics are superb and the most realistic 3D effects in any of the Microsphere games — there is also lots of colour, well laid out and not too hard on the eyes. All aspiring detectives will love *Sam Cruise*, and I'm sure it will be a hit."**

CRITICISM

"This game is fun to play: there's so much to it! The gameplay is very good. Contrast is excellent, keeping you occupied is an understatement. Graphics are admirable; lots of colour has been used well, and the *Skool Daze* type characters are neat. Loads of things like the lights and the disguises have been put together with brilliant attention to detail. I think MICROSPERE **really have got something here"**

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q up, A down, O left, P right b pull/draw blind, D change disguise, F fuse, G pick up object, I information, K knock/use key at door, L switch on/off light, R forward roll, S aerial somersault, T use telephone, H hang up phone
Joystick: Kempston, Cursor, Interface 2
Keyboard play: responsive: unusual to begin with, but easy to get the hang of
Use of colour: easy on the eye
Graphics: lovely detail
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: twenty or so in a large scrolling playing area
General rating: a highly original atmospheric game

Use of computer	91%
Graphics	92%
Playability	88%
Getting started	90%
Addictive qualities	93%
Value for money	93%
Overall	93%

Producer: Microsphere
Retail Price: **£7.95**
Author: **Dave Reidy**

ROGUE TROOPER

Producer: Piranha
Retail Price: **£9.99**
Author: **Design Design**

Readers of 2000 AD will recognise the main character in PIRANHA's latest game. Rogue Trooper is the soul survivor of the Quartz massacre. The rest of his regiment was systematically wiped out after being betrayed to the Norts and then left to the mercies of the Sun Legion.

The vid-tapes storing the vital evidence which Rogue Trooper craves will probably have survived the blast due to their protective casing. Eight of these vid-tapes must be collected and put safely in a waiting shuttle for transportation to the spaceport where the atrocity of the massacre can be revealed.

Three of Rogue's friends who died in the Quartz massacre were stored at the moment of their death on micro-chips. These chips are now attatched to Rogue's helmet, back-pack and gun, and each of them, Helm, Gunnar and Bagman have different personalities. These GI buddies cajole and advise Rogue as he roams the hideously contaminated Nu Earth.

The Nu Earth has been completely ravaged by the effects of chemical warfare, although because he is a genetic creation, this only affects Rogue slowly. The Norts who are guarding this desolate wasteland have to wear special breathing masks in order to survive, and can be recognised because of this. As Rogue stomps around the Nu Earth he can either avoid the Norts or blast them with his own weapon. Extra ammo can be collected along the way if supplies get low.

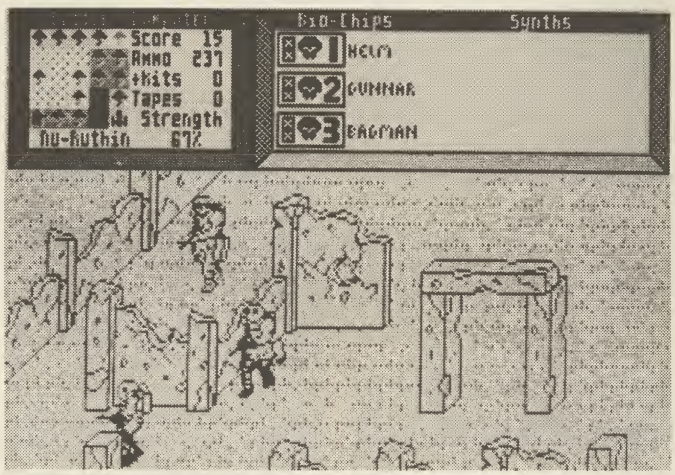
The marauding Norts are not the only perils facing Rogue on this ragged planet. Beware the minefields and the automated pill-boxes which shoot anything (even Norts if they get in the way), and take quite a bit of blasting to destroy.

Each time Rogue is shot he loses five strength points, and stepping on a mine will severely dent his reserves. This damage is shown by the amount of strength he has left. When this strength level reaches zero he will die and the game will be over. First-aid packages crop up now and again and will replenish some of Rogue's energy.

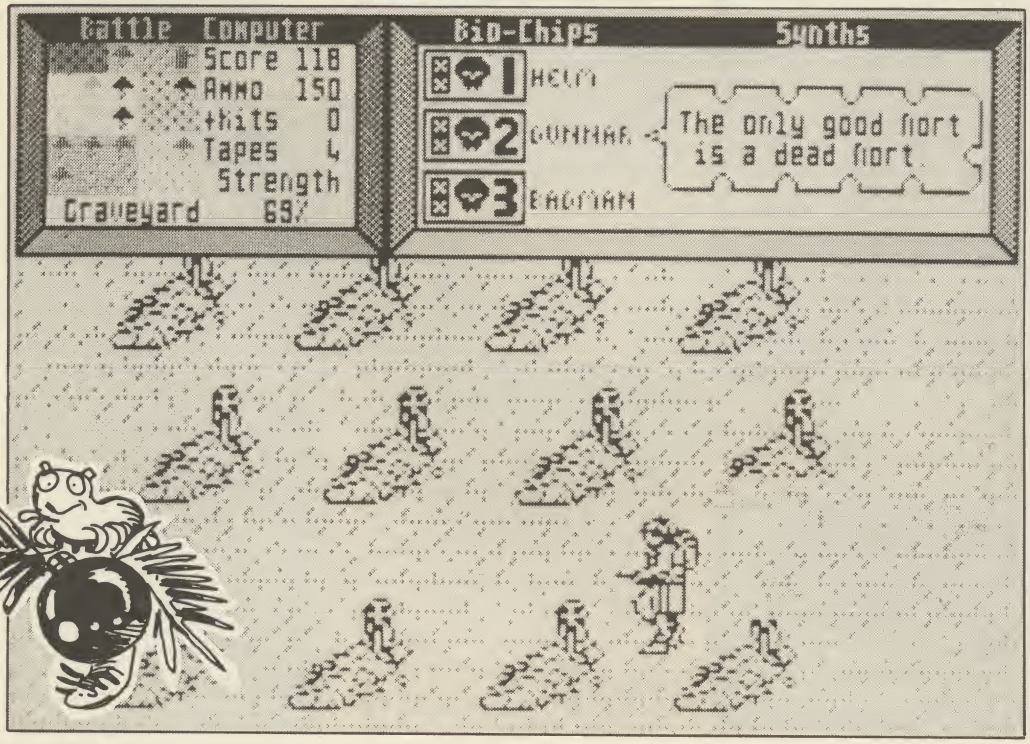
Rogue's status is shown on a chart at the top of the main screen. This shows how much ammo and first-aid kits he is currently holding and how many of the tapes he has found. Points are scored for any Norts killed and Rogue's strength is indicated as a percentage at the bottom of the chart. To the left is a small map. It shows up areas containing Norts, the location of the shuttle, and the type of ground around. This is important, as while Rogue is in some terrain, he is slowly healed, whilst the rad desert and other areas will slowly drain his strength. To the right are the three chips and a small screen on which their messages and general running commentary are displayed.

The essential vid-tapes are easily recognised and these, like everything else in the game are automatically picked up when Rogue walks into them.

The ruined city is pretty packed with norts, so old Rogue had better watch his step



Rogue in the nort graveyard. But he's out of med kits, so he'd better be careful



CRITICISM

● **"I found that after only a few goes I was only one tape away from finishing the game. The game is quite addictive at first, but this soon wears off as you realize that it really is a very small play area, as the screen rolls around. All the different types of area contain some well drawn graphics but are all stick drawings, and lack any substance — I also found these areas a bit bare as far as baddies go. I would recommend this to someone who finds games hard to play — but for hardened players *Rogue Trooper* is much too boring."**

● *"The game perhaps isn't as good or as compelling as it could have been. Stomping around a fairly small wraparound playing area searching for things and murdering the odd baddie is a plot that's been used all too often in the games world. There is an overall lack of polish to the game. Graphically and sonically there is nothing in Rogue* that will raise any eyebrows but they are adequate. I think this will appeal mainly to 2000AD fans as the game itself is fairly run-of-the-mill."

● *"Rogue Trooper* is an excellent game. The perspective is very good, and though the variation of colour starts to hurt the eyes after a while, I could play this game for hours. I only have a small gripe, and thats that its a little too easy to complete, and the finishing reward screen is fairly boring. The comments by the biochips add atmosphere to it, and the game is fun even if you forget the tapes, and go around blasting Norts and pill boxes."

COMMENTS

Control keys: definable
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, Sinclair Interface II
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: monochrome
Graphics: isometric 3D graphics
Sound: spot effects
Skill levels: one
Screens: 72
General rating: Good game, but a bit easy

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	82%
Playability	76%
Getting started	83%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	71%
Overall	**79%**

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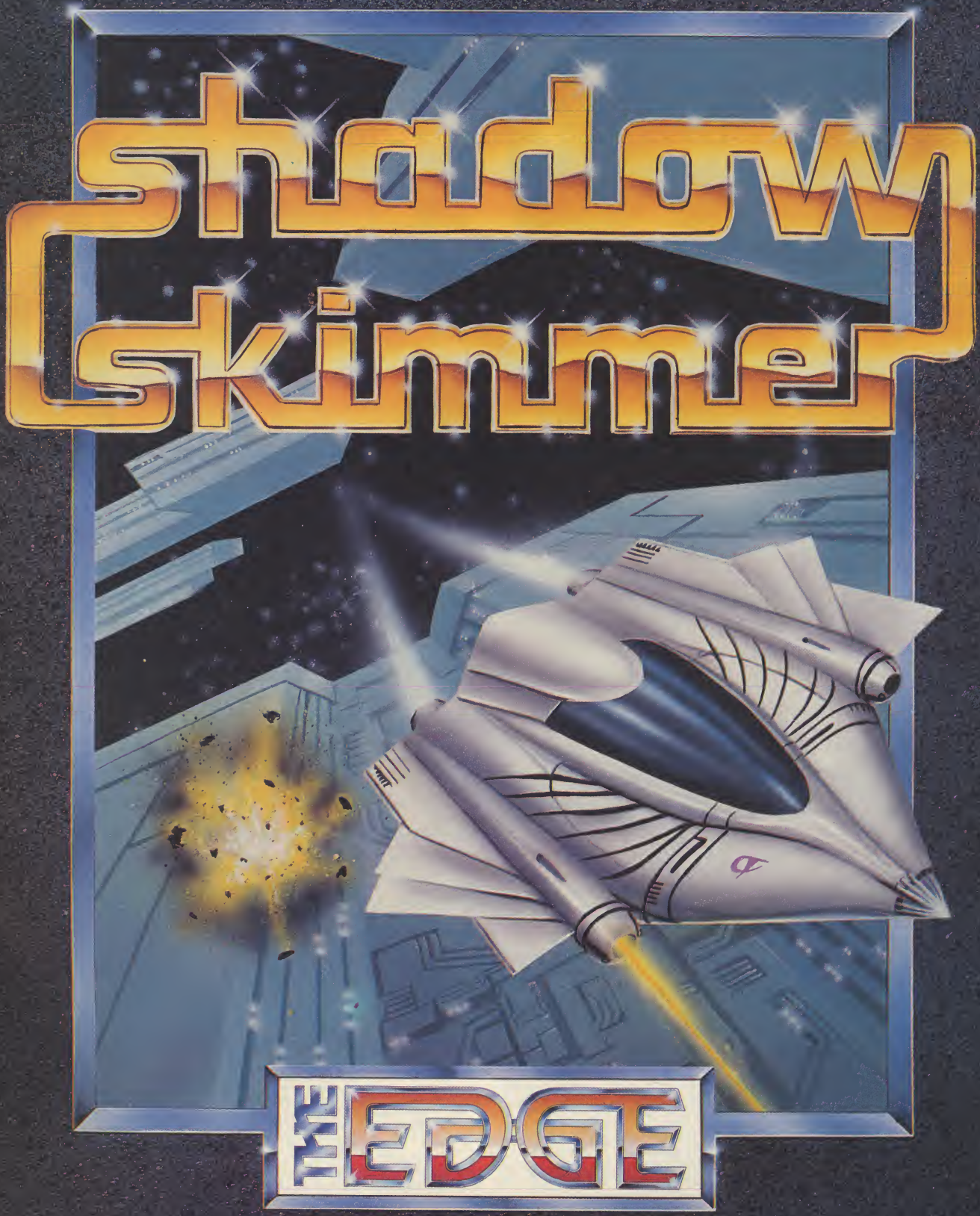

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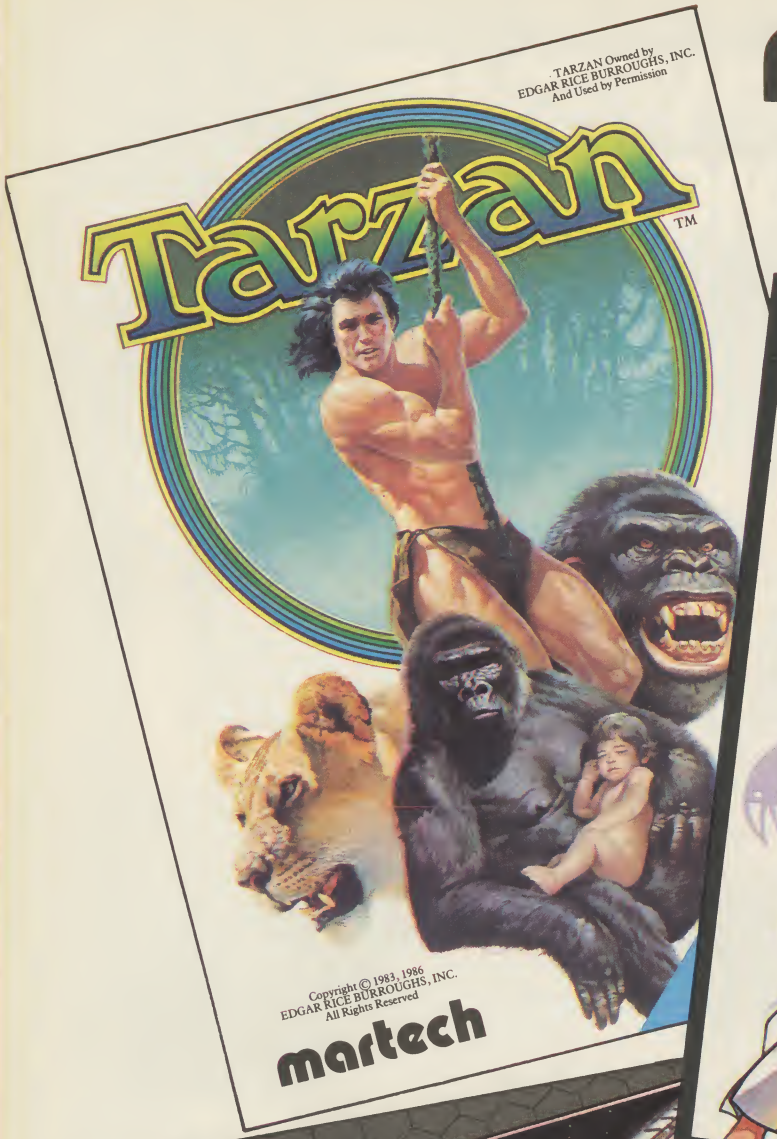


LLOYD MANGRAM'S FORUM

The Christmas FORUM and not a single Christmas card! What a disappointment — but it's still the middle of November, so there's plenty of time left for people to send in cards for me to hang up above the fireplace in my cottage.

The big rush to get the Christmas Special ready in time is in progress at the moment, so without further ado, on with the letters . . . this month I couldn't find a missive that really deserved the £20 prize — let's hope the quality of letters improves in 1987!

COMMERCIAL BREAK

Dear Lloyd,
We own a Computer fanzine called THE SPECTRUM BUG. These people work in it: John David (me); Simon Calvert; Russel Goulbourne; 'The Packer', who packs in our mail-order department and many more.

It contains news, letters, hints, Reviews, programs, and loads more and is available from: ORDERS, Buggalot Towers, 18 Dailton Road, Up Holland, WN8 0HR.It costs 50 pence a month or £7.00 a year.

It's best to buy it for a year because if you buy it every month you might not get a copy . . . Cheques and postal orders made payable to The Spectrum Bug, please.

John David, Buggalot Towers, Up Holland, West Lancs.

I understand Hannah has plans to take another look at fanzines early next year, so budding publishers should make sure she has the latest issues of their magazines.

Still no news on the YOUR SINCLAIR fanzine competition — even though our beloved Editor entered at the PCW Show having spotted a copy of CRASH in the collection of fanzines they used to illustrate the competition page. . . .

LM

ROLE PLAY REQUEST

Dear CRASH,
After reading your magazine(s) since you started way back then, I felt that I should pen (type??) a letter.

I have noticed recently a trend towards role-playing, Play By Mail and so on. I am in some respects glad about this. Really, role-playing has lost its last reasonable forum. Most magazines are either very poor quality or house-based, making a bias towards the publisher's products. So why don't you publish properly a RPG/PBM magazine? I'm sure it will be nicely subscribed to — there is a need for it. So dear nice ol' **NEWSFIELD** how about it??

The PBM column is, I admit, interesting but it seems to make out that the professional money-making games are the only ones worth bothering about. How about the amateur ones, especially those run by fanzines. These are on the whole free, only costing a stamp. They are by no means 'unprofessional' but very interesting and enjoyable. Ones I play in are *Toon II* by **TOME OF HORRORS**; *The Land* under **SEWARS** and I am about to join *Karush* in **TELEGRAPH ROAD.**

So why not give the amateur games an outlet? How about making a games directory, listing all PBM games, costs and who to contact in a similar fashion to the software directory in the first few issues of CRASH, which listed all the games written before the magazine was published, remember the one?

Stephen Oliver, Hull

Just at the moment, everyone is concentrating on **LM** *— and you should have spotted the results of all that effort by now! The New Year could bring some surprises on the PBM front, but The Powers That Be rarely tell me anything . . . except that I can't have a pay rise!*

As for amateur PBM games — if you run one, drop Brendon Kavenagh a line and tell him all about it. He's already covered some 'amateur' football games in his column.

LM

ABYSMAL!

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to tell you how abysmal your reviewers are, and not so amazingly brilliant as Paul Bell seems to think in his rather creepy letter in October (hoping to win his £20 of software). But I bet there are people like me who every month read your mag, see a CRASH Smash, think 'oh great!', buy it, play it and think what an abysmal game and think of the £10.00 that has just been wasted. A few games that spring to mind are: *Starstrike 2*, *Zoids*, *Jack the Nipper*, *Pentagram*, *Gunfright*, *Nightshade*, *Batman*, *Winter Games* and *Sweevos World*.

Don't try getting out of it by saying I'm a miserable sod who doesn't like anything, because there are smashes which are very good: *Dynamite Dan 2*, *Robin of the Wood*, *Quazatron*, *Elite*, *Bombjack*, *Commando*, *Shadowfire* and more.

But you cannot get away from the fact that your reviews are abysmal, and I think take too much notice of the Producer eg **ULTIMATE** for *Pentagram*, **OCEAN** for *Batman*, **GARGOYLE** for *Sweevo's World*. Now can you imagine **ULTIMATE** getting anything but a CRASH Smash? Wouldn't that be a surprise? But I bet it won't happen no matter how abysmal the games are that they write.

While I think about abysmal games, *Superbowl* springs to mind. (85% indeed, I've never played such a ridiculous game). If any software houses are listening, please write an American Football game, in the same sort of way as *Matchday* and *World Series Basketball*. As American Football is becoming ever more popular in England I'm sure that a game like this would go down very well. The only company I could see doing this would be **OCEAN/IMAGINE.**

I somehow don't think you'll publish this, but show this letter to your reviewers and see what they think.

Nick Clemons, Wolston, Warwickshire.

PS I do think that your reviews are very good, long and detailed — they're just ALWAYS WRONG.

ALWAYS WRONG indeed! What about the reviews for Dynamite Dan 2, Robin of the the Wood, Quazatron, Elite, Bombjack, Commando, Shadowfire *'and many more'.*

Then you go on to say that the reviews are very good . . . some internal inconsistency in your argument here, I think. No doubt other readers will wish to have their say in due course.

LM

DOING THE SUMS

Dear Crash!,
Do I have a story to tell or do I have a story to tell? Sitting comfortably are we, then I shall begin.

It all started a week before Issue 34 of CRASH was due to be in the shops. I usually receive my CRASH a week before the shops (I don't know if other folk do also), so as you can imagine I was eagerly awaiting the rattle of the letter box. Well I waited and waited but it didn't come. I thought this very strange, as CRASH have been very good in delivering to my door. Anyway, as I was thinking over the situation in the living-room, I happened to glance at the local newspaper and Gasp! Shock! Horror! on the front page in bold writing it said 'Postal Strike Hits Dundee'. Pulling my hair out in desperation I took it for granted that this was the ▶

reason why my CRASH hadn't been delivered. So I waited patiently 'til the strike was over thinking I would receive my CRASH any day, but, after a few days I still hadn't received it and decided to investigate.

More problems hit me as I couldn't find the piece of paper with my Mystical Number and when my Subscription ran out. Luckily I remembered I had written my number on an offer in the magazine months ago but hadn't sent it, so digging through past copies, I found my number and remembering the Mystical formula for finding out if your subscription is running out, I added 11 to my number which started CP22, and found to my dismay that it had indeed ran out and CRASH wouldn't be coming through my door till I sent another cheque through the post. So here is a warning to all other CRASH subscribers. Don't let this happen to you and always check your number.

Luv and kisses, G Brown, Downfield, Dundee

A cautionary tale indeed, Mr Brown.

LM

THE CASE FOR THE DEFENCE

Dear Sir,

I am writing in defence of the Spectrum 128, and also to tell P A Rosbotham of Garswood to read manuals and books before making crap statements about computers of which he knows nothing about.

1. If Spectrums (48K) are so outdated, why do software companies still write brilliant games for them? I admit that the sound on the Spectrum 48K is not up to scratch but the graphics are improving all the time. Take *Lightforce* — somehow there are no attribute problems, and it looks as good as anything on the Commode (whoops!) Commodore.

2. With regards to the 128's sound, I admit that the first few games lacked imagination, but after buying *Glider Rider* I forgot about those. If you talk to the sound chip using OUT commands you can control the three channels in 128 sound and also control BEEP at the same time, meaning you could have 4 to 5 channel sound — better sound than the C64. The 128 sound chip can play while pictures and text are running on the screen.

3. I would also like to point out that both the 48 and 128 Spectrums are more 'user' friendly than any of the Commodores could dream of being. This is because of the old fashioned BASIC that Commodore have included in their machines.

4. A last word for P A Rosbotham. Before dragging Sinclair's name through the mud, think about how many Commodore computers have been unsuccessful or crap!. On the crap side there's the VIC 20. On the unsuccessful side there's the Commodore 128. Mr Rosbotham should learn to read and listen before he writes next time.

Matthew Martin, Cwmbran, Gwent

A strong rebuttal of Mr Rosbotham's views indeed, Matthew. Another letter from the pen of Mr R appears in the FORUM this month — he anticipated the outcry his last missive would generate . . .

LM

'PROPER REVIEWS' REQUESTED

Dear Lloyd,

I have brought CRASH since Issue No 1 and never had any complaints before, but Lloyd what's happening? *Glider Rider* by **QUICKSILVA** received a review rating of 92% for the 128K version and wasn't CRASH Smashed. To quote CRASH "If only software houses would write games for the 128 it might become as popular as the 48."

Well come on CRASH, If only you gave 128 games proper reviews, then the 128 might become accepted by games freaks.

Also, at the top of reviews could we have an indication as to machine compatability as per the old days eg. 48k — 48/128K - 128K, as I have purchased several games reviewed by CRASH which will not load on the 128.

128s rule, A R Woodley, Basildon, Essex.

We decided that putting a CRASH Smash *logo on the* Glider Rider *review might have lead to confusion as it was only the 128K version that was worthy of the accolade. This month, you will notice,* Starglider *from* **RAINBIRD** *is a Smash for both versions of the Spectrum and we have made this as obvious as possible.*

As for supporting and reviewing 128K games, cast your mind back to our review of Knight Tyme *— the 'first 128K Smash'. The whole question of machine compatibility is complicated by the fact that there have been several issues of the 128K machine already and it is difficult to be definitive. All new games should be compatible with most 128s and the 48 Spectrums — it's the older games where the problems seem to lie.*

LM

FOOTBALL DEBATE

Dear Sir,

As a subscriber for two years running, and a loyal fan of CRASH magazine, I decided to send you this letter to complain about a certain review in Issue 33 regarding **ADDICTIVE**'s *Head Coach*. I purchased this game some time ago at the PCW show, and was astounded by its qualities in keeping the user totally involved at all times by calling the plays and deciding match tactics, as well as by trading deals between matches. What amazed me the most was the up-dating each season of the statistics, including the player's ages, season record, overall record, super-bowl victories and so on.

On reflection, your adverse comments coupled with pathetic ratings in the various categories baffled me completely. If you cast your mind back to the *Football Manager* game, one can find many annoying elements — each season, players' skills/energy get changed and also the graphics are no better than your flimsy review of *Rugby Manager*. Yet *Head Coach* at least gives the user a fair representation of the game, if indeed it is only stick men graphics.

While on the subject of comparisons, the league fixtures in *Football Manager* leave a lot to be desired as a team is only played once and not home and away. And as for the other teams scores, they sometimes resemble a rugby league match. Meanwhile at least *Head Coach* attempts to make some effort by printing out decent scores, and by randomising league fixtures so that there is a constant variety of opponents, depending on league success.

Anyway putting these various points aside, my main bone of contention is that if you can give *Football Manager* a 100% review or thereabouts, then *Head Coach* should follow close behind. Before I sign off, my personal opinion is that *Head Coach* may lack some of the rules of American Football (such as 4 downs to make 10 yards), but I'll reckon 80% of the fans of American Football would love this game. I suggest you pick another wally who at least likes American Football and give the game what it deserves....A DECENT REVIEW!!!!!!!!!!

J T F Hooley, Twickenham, Middlesex

The best thing I can do in the circumstances, is to hand over temporarily to Dominic Handy — our in-house American Football afficianado and the driving force behind the review in question . . .

I'm sorry that you didn't like the review of Head Coach John — I can assure you that all the reviewers like American Football and I, at least, am sure of the rules and know plenty about the game. When comparing the *Football Manager* to *Head Coach*, you must realise that there was a completely different review team then, with a different editor — and the magazine was relatively new. You must also take into account that programming techniques and knowledge have improved since 1984. The review of *Head Coach* was written as an assessment of a simulation game. To be a good simulation game, the program must be written accurately with proper attention to the rules and regulations of the sport involved — and it has to be said that *Head Coach* is very inaccurate as far as rules go — you say that it lacks the rule allowing 4 downs for 10 yards. This is the backbone of the whole game: the whole point of it is to progress down the pitch in the right number of downs. You also say that the graphics are as good as, if not better than *Football Manager*, yet the ratings are worse — surely if all reviews were compared to old games then most new games would be Smashes? I think is it much better to compare with present day standards. As to 80% of American Football fans liking it, I must disagree, as any knowledgable fan would be annoyed with the amateurish way in which it was written. You only have to look at **ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE**'s *American Football* to see how good the game could have been. Lastly, I must stress again that the criticism that appeared in our review was a personal opinion from American Football fans.

Thank you Dominic.

LM

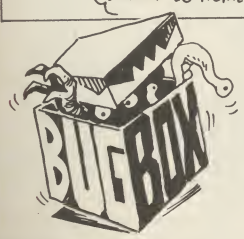
PENPAL CORNER

This month's postbag included a few appeals for Spectrum-owning pen pals. If you'd like to start writing letters to a fellow reader, here are a few people who'd like to hear from you . . .

Roger Brown
43 Victoria Road
Rayleigh
Essex
SS6 8EG

Steffan Randall
27 Mansfeldt Road
Newbold
Chesterfield
Derbyshire
S41 7BW

Craig Hough
1 Coniston Way
Croston
Preston
Lancs
PR5 7SD



HARD TO FIND

Since the beginning of 1985 I have been unsuccessfully trying to find the micro-PROLOG program for the 48K Spectrum.

Having tried Sinclair Research, a Swedish distributor and a number of software shops in London. I now turn to CRASH as a last resort.

I would like to know if anyone can give me a suggestion as to where I might find it.

Borje Nilsson, Bakverksv. 4, S-724 76 Vasteras, Sweden

Anyone out there able to help Borje?

LM

REPAIRSHOP BLUES

Dear Lloyd,

Warning: All spectrum owners with joysticks, printers or anything else which uses your expansion port please read on . . .

I have sent my Spectrum to **MANCOMP LTD**, three times (unreliable Spectrum). The first and second times they did a good job of it and I was pleased, so when I had another problem I sent it to them again. This time when it came back, horror of horrors, I found a piece of printer paper saying that I couldn't use my joystick, printer or anything else for three months (that's why this letter is typewritten and not thermally printed). What can I do for three months without my peripherals? (answers on a postcard please . . .).

Trevor Wright, Ewyas Harold,

It seems a few repair firms are putting stickers over the expansion port when they've fixed a Spectrum. An awful lot of faults are caused by people connecting or disconnecting peripherals while the power is on, or wobbling the connection during a franctic session of alien-zapping. This tends to cause the tracks to short out, and can result in damage to the works of the computer.

I don't think **MANCOMP** *actually mean you CAN'T use a printer — it's more likely that they mean they won't repair your computer under their three-month warranty if you do plug something into its expansion port. Whether this approach is entirely 'fair' is open to question. Any repair firms like to comment?*

LM

DOWNSIDE UP

G'day Sport!,

I must say that I find your magazine interesting, full of hidden messages and cryptic information.

F'rinstance, from page 162 of your November issue it's obvious that **PALACE SOFTWARE**'s *Sacred Armour of Antiriad* was programmed down under in good ol' Oz.

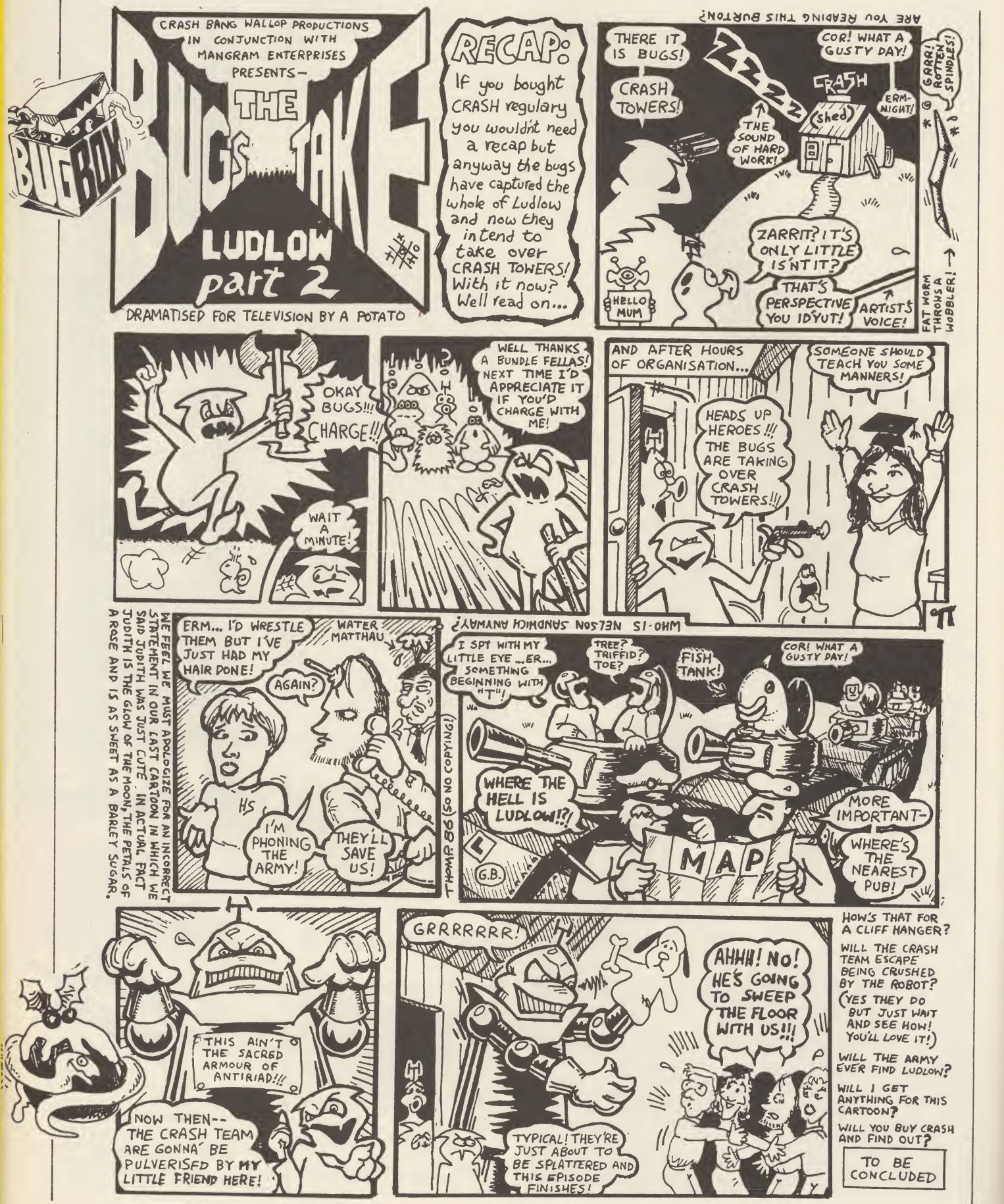
Ah well, back to the old amber nectar.

Cheers, Bruce.

Martin Dunn, St Annes, Lancashire

No. Just a slight Antipodean inclination (LMLWD) 'down' in ART!

LM



CRASH BANG WALLOP PRODUCTIONS IN CONJUNCTION WITH MANGRAM ENTERPRISES PRESENTS—
BUGBOX
THE BUGS TAKE LUDLOW part 2
DRAMATISED FOR TELEVISION BY A POTATO
RECAP: If you bought CRASH regulary you wouldn't need a recap but anyway the bugs have captured the whole of Ludlow and now they intend to take over CRASH TOWERS! With it now? Well read on...
ARE YOU READING THIS BURTON?
THERE IT IS BUGS!
CRASH TOWERS!
ZZZZ
COR! WHAT A GUSTY DAY!
CRASH
(shed)
ERM-NIGHT!
THE SOUND OF HARD WORK!
GRRR! ROTTEN SPINDLES!
ZARRIT? IT'S ONLY LITTLE IS'NT IT?
THAT'S PERSPECTIVE YOU ID'YUT!
ARTIST'S VOICE!
HELLO MUM
FAT WORM THROWS A WOBBLER!
OKAY BUGS!!! CHARGE!!!
WAIT A MINUTE!
WELL THANKS A BUNDLE FELLAS! NEXT TIME I'D APPRECIATE IT IF YOU'D CHARGE WITH ME!
AND AFTER HOURS OF ORGANISATION...
SOMEONE SHOULD TEACH YOU SOME MANNERS!
HEADS UP HEROES!!! THE BUGS ARE TAKING OVER CRASH TOWERS!!!
WE FEEL WE MUST APOLOGIZE FOR AN INCORRECT STATEMENT IN OUR LAST CARTOON IN WHICH WE SAID JUDITH WAS JUST CUTE. IN ACTUAL FACT JUDITH IS THE GLOW OF THE MOON, THE PETALS OF A ROSE AND IS AS SWEET AS A BARLEY SUGAR.
ERM... I'D WRESTLE THEM BUT I'VE JUST HAD MY HAIR DONE!
WATER MATTHAU
AGAIN?
I'M PHONING THE ARMY!
THEY'LL SAVE US!
THOMP. 86 (SO NO COPYING!)
WHO-IS NELSON SANDWICH ANYWAY?
I SPY WITH MY LITTLE EYE ...ER... SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH "T"!
TREE? TRIFFID? TOE?
FISH TANK!
COR! WHAT A GUSTY DAY!
WHERE THE HELL IS LUDLOW!?!
MORE IMPORTANT—
WHERE'S THE NEAREST PUB!
MAP
G.B.
THIS AIN'T THE SACRED ARMOUR OF ANTIRIAD!!!
NOW THEN-- THE CRASH TEAM ARE GONNA' BE PULVERISED BY MY LITTLE FRIEND HERE!
GRRRRRRR!
AHHH! NO! HE'S GOING TO SWEEP THE FLOOR WITH US!!!
TYPICAL! THEY'RE JUST ABOUT TO BE SPLATTERED AND THIS EPISODE FINISHES!
HOW'S THAT FOR A CLIFF HANGER?
WILL THE CRASH TEAM ESCAPE BEING CRUSHED BY THE ROBOT? (YES THEY DO BUT JUST WAIT AND SEE HOW! YOU'LL LOVE IT!)
WILL THE ARMY EVER FIND LUDLOW?
WILL I GET ANYTHING FOR THIS CARTOON?
WILL YOU BUY CRASH AND FIND OUT?
TO BE CONCLUDED

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Commodore 64/128 disk	£14.99
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CHARTWATCHING

Dear Lloyd,
Having read all the complaints about 3D games, **ULTIMATE**, and the complaints about reviewers and how they review, I decided to compile the overall CRASH Hotline Top 30 chart for all 33 issues, and it turned out like this.

1. *Elite* **92%**
2 *Bombjack* **92%**
3 *Commando* **94%**
4 *Batman* **92%**
5 *Jack the Nipper* **93%**
6 *Lunar Jetman* **95%**
7 *Green Beret* **88%**
8 *Everyone's a Wally* **93%**
9 *Jet Set Willy* **93%**
10 *Atic Atac* **92%**
11 *Match Day* **86%**
12 *Ghosts n Goblins* **95%**
13 *Codename Mat* **93%**
14 *Exploding Fist* **92%**
15 *Quazatron* **94%**
16 *Knight Lore* **94%**
17 *Shadowfire* **96%**
18 *Spy Hunter* **89%**
19 *Alien 8* **95%**
20 *Frank Bruno's Boxing* **86%**
21 *Sabrewulf* **91%**
22 *Fairlight* **93%**
23 *Manic Miner*
24 *Underwurlde* **92%**
25 *Starstrike* **93%**
26 *Zoom*
27 *Chequered Flag*
28 *Hypersports* **92%**
29 *Starquake* **96%**
30 *Jet Pac*

Out of the first 17, only 2 didn't get a CRASH Smash, and out of 30, only 7 didn't receive his great accolade. Four of the seven were so close that people shouldn't be complaining about having the reviewers names (initials) next to their comments, because the 'jury' of three usually get it right. The other three games I do not think were reviewed, but if they were I am certain that they would have got exceedingly high marks, because they were all very good games at the time they were brought out.

Then there are all the people who complain about **ULTIMATE**. If you look at the Top 30, **ULTIMATE** have 7 out of the Top 30 games. Who says they don't produce brilliant games? The people who read CRASH voted for this chart so you can't complain.

The three games which have had most of the arguments against them are all in the Top 30, so isn't surprising that **ULTIMATE**, and other companies like them, are using this format.

So stop complaining because you can't do anything about it, and for a change can't we have some constructive comments?
John Hewitt, York

An interesting statistical analysis, John. I am forced to agree with all your sentiments. The next correspondent, however, puts forward a different viewpoint . . .

LM

BAD OLD DAYS

Dear Lloyd,
I agree with Robert Hayden's letter in last month's CRASH. I paid out a fiver for games like *Maziacs* and *Escape* which are pure garbage. The only quality the games had was the artwork on the inlay cards. I don't know why people grumble about games costing £10.00 — take a look at some of the new budget games available. I have recently purchased *Molecule Man* from **MASTERTRONIC** and *Pro Golf* from **ATLANTIS** which are two of the most accurate and enjoyable games I have ever played. At only £1.99 they are both great value for money.

Lastly, you'd better get your comp's minion seen to by a doctor. The *Shaolin's Road* spot the difference competition only seemed to have one difference!! (probably a printing error) which was a tiny dot on the man on the right hand side's head!
Ronald Henderson, Hamilton, Lanarkshire

Generally you get what you pay for. Sometimes you get more than you pay for — in the case of Knight Tyme *perhaps — and other times you get less —* Great Space Race *et al.*

The lack of differences wasn't really the downtrodden Minion's fault — someone 'Up in ART' was doing his very best to present the drawing in the most gorgeous way and slipped up, putting the same picture in twice. Words have been exchanged, and the competition re-run. Sorry for the eyestrain it caused . . .

LM

AGEIST COMPETITIONS POLICY!

Dear Lloyd,
I must write to you (which I already have) concerning competitions in CRASH — the problem is age groups. You see, although many readers of CRASH are pretty old, (17+) I am only 11. I have been reading CRASH since Issue 1, and have every issue so far. I love entering competitions, and I enter quite a lot of them, but now I am wondering whether should carry on, because every time I enter, I'm beaten by people who are about 10 years older than me (especially in drawing comps). I have no chance. Okay, I am quite good at drawing and answering competitions, but not as good as people who are twice as old. I have written before about age groups. That is what you need! (10-15, 15-20, 20+). Please consider this point, because there are other young kids out there!
Nick Drewett, Bushey, Hertfordshire.

A reasonable point, Nick. I have a feeling that our Competition Minion would panic if we told him that from now on there would be three age groups for every competition — the extra administration involved in effectively running three competitions for every one would be enormous!

As it is, we do try to have a mix of competition types, including simpler wordsquares and spot the differences, where age isn't really a barrier to winning. Admittedly, the older you are the better you are likely to be at drawing and we do try to take into account ages of entrants when compiling the list of runners up. I seem to remember a six-year-old getting an 'honourable mention' in a Frank Bruno Boxing *competition many moons ago, for instance.*

I'd be interested to hear other readers' comments on the subject of competitions.

LM

CRASH MEGA-BEINGS . . .

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you in confusion. I recently decided to purchase an NLQ printer, and with it a 'shiny' new wordprocessor, to replace my ageing *Tasword II*.

In the search for enlightenment as to which wordprocessor to buy, I delved through my CRASH back issues and came up with the August 1986 TECH NICHE.

I avidly pored over the pages, absorbing the wisdom there abounding, but to what end? I was still as uncertain as to the best purchase.

Now I am well aware that, as with most things, it is very much a case of each to his own. But surely having been locked in a broom cupboard for a few days with only bread, water and a Spectrum (man cannot live by bread alone), Mr Handy could have come up with something less ambiguous than:

At the end of the *Tasword III* review, "There is no doubt in my mind **TASMAN** have now definitely got the top spot as far as wordprocessors go".

And then going on to say at the end of *The Writer* review, "Any self-respecting Spectrum owner who wants a wordprocessor should definitely go out and get *The Writer*".

So which is it? buy both and use them on alternate days? We mere mortals look toward the omnipotent mega-beings at CRASH, keepers of the 'Eye-of-Oktup' for guidance. Surely, since Mr Handy (maybe not so handy after all!) had the opportunity to give these packages a good going over, he could have made a closing recommendation, and left the final decision to us.
S Young, Headingly, Leeds.

I think the final decision is still probably up to you. Dominic was clearly very impressed with both packages, and as something of a wordprocessor collector, is the kind of fellow who would have purchased both. . . .

Dom tells me that both packages can drive a printer through the RS232 port on Interface 1 — and reckons that Tasword III *would probably be the better bet for you, seeing as you already have* Tasword II. *Thus speaks a Mega-Being . . .*

LM

DISK PLUG

Dear Lloyd,
Having just read Robert Blains' complaint in Issue 34 about there being no support for the **OPUS** *Discovery* disk system, can I put a plug in for a club a few **OPUS** users have started in our area? It's called the *Spectrum Discovery Club*, and we hope that we can get enough interest going to put pressure on software houses to produce disk software. We are also issuing a newsletter free of charge with members' hints, tips and letters — so come on you **OPUS** users let's get together and be a force to be reckoned with.

Anyone interested should send a self-addressed envelope to *Spectrum Discovery Club*, 8 Raynham Crescent, Keighley, West Yorkshire.
Peter Lilley, Keighley, West Yorkshire

And the very best of luck with the club, Peter. You might like to consider putting out own Tech Tipster, Simon Goodwin, on your mailing list . . .

LM

BARBARIC CRUELTY

Dear Sir,
Why did you review the *Ole Toro* computer game from **AMERICANA**? And why did you not condemn the subject matter? I enclose a recent review of the game from one of your rivals, C&VG magazine, which should have been your attitude to this appalling game.

In your next issue, perhaps you should print a full page colour picture of a scene from this 'sport', or perhaps send out videos of a bullfight. CRASH readers will then be able to see what really happens here, with the BLOOD and the GORE and then make up their minds whether or not they should buy *Ole Toro*.

R C Fortune, Isle of Sheppey, Kent

Hmm. Like Tim Metcalfe, editor of C&VG who wrote the review, you obviously hold strong views on cruelty to animals — and sign your letter 'Project Basilisk'. You do have a valid point about bull fighting, which I would never seek to defend, but I cannot agree with your suggestions. I don't much like being told what my attitude should be, either.

We reviewed Ole Toro *because it is a computer game — a computer game which doesn't glorify the violence of bull fighting. Had it done so, we may have felt it appropriate to pass comment. You and Tim are both entitled to your opinions, but 'reviewing' a game and doing nothing but condemn its subject material doesn't seem very positive to me. 0/10 across the board because you disagree with the basic scenario of a game seems very negative . . .*

To take your argument to its logical conclusion, we should print horrific pictures of human mutilation with every wargame reviewed in FRONTLINE — pictures of SS Torture with the review of The Great Escape, and pictures of the results on human beings of aerial bombing with just about every flight simulator. And so on. The magazine would become a catalogue of horror and mutilation if we looked for a literal message behind every game scenario.

Sadly, many computer games feature violence, but the violence that takes place between pixels on the screen of a computer is, to my mind, much less harmful and much less 'de-sensitising' than the images brought into our homes by television and newspapers.

What do other readers feel about this subject?

LM

EL TORO

- **Machine:** Spectrum
- **Supplier:** US Gold/Americana
- **Price:** £2.99

A sick "sport" becomes a sick "game" thanks to the Spanish Dinamic programming people. They've taken their national pastime of butchering bulls in public and turned it into the nastiest bit of "software" I've seen for some time.

Just like the real thing the idea of the game is to get your little matador to butcher the bull in the most "artistic" manner possible.

The people who created this game ought to have THEIR ears chopped off — and US Gold ought to be ashamed of themselves actually releasing it.

If you see this on the shelves of your local computer store get them to take it off and put it where it belongs. In the bin. It's a crude and barbaric game that should never have been released.

Tim

Graphics	**0**
Sound	**0**
Value	**less than 0**
Playability	**0**

SOFTWARE RIP-OFFS?

Dear Lloyd,
Please, please can you help us. We now think that we have been ripped off by a mail-order software firm. Over two months ago (October 12th), my friend Bridget Wolar and myself sent a total of £22.00 to **SOFTWARE WORLD (UK) LTD.** I sent £12.95 for the Spectrum 128 version of *Fairlight II*, which they stated in their catalogue as being available for sale now. My friend sent for *Knight Tyme* and the book *Spectrum Machine Language For The Absolute Beginner* which cost her £9.00 for the Spectrum 128. A month later Bridget received the incorrect version of *Knight Tyme* and she returned it to them immediately after receiving it. As the weeks passed we began to get worried, since we had received no word from the company. We sent several letters to the company, but they didn't reply. So recently I tried to phone them, but I failed to get through.

I've lost money before when a software firm **UNITSOFT** went bankrupt, but I have read nothing about this mail order company going out of business. Please Lloyd, you are our last hope of get- ▶

GIANT EGOS

Dear Lloyd,
Please, please, please print this letter for me or CRASH popularity ratings will go down by one! Thank you. The reason I want you to print it is because I seem to be left out a bit (Ahhhhhhh).

My cousin, namely Sean Doran, got his name mentioned twice in Issue 34 — for the 'Joe Bug' cartoon in the FORUM and he was able also a superhero for *Master of Magic*. All this seems to have gone to his head. So much so that he is having difficulty getting through the door (sorry for stealing your joke John). My pen pal, John Wilson is a regular Superhero and has given himself the nickname 'El Supremo'. All this is making me so mad, and so determined to get my name mentioned in the most popular computer mag in the world.

The main point of my letter is about the poor state of budget software. Why do so many budget software houses market such totally crap games? Most games are hardly even worth 50p never mind two or three pounds. One glowing example of crap software was *Bump Set Spike* in Issue 34. Not one of the ratings was above 45%. I think that speaks for itself! Yet, after budget software houses see their new release flop, they release another crap game and watch it flop too. Surely they would have the sense to produce better games than were doing rather than filling computer shop shelves with rubbish. I think that some budget software houses just about manage to scrape up enough money to keep their company going and my advice to them is, stop trying!

Not all budget software houses are like this of course. **MASTERTRONIC** and **FIREBIRD** are two of the best around at the moment. I remember when **MASTERTRONIC** wrote games like *Alcatraz Harry* and *Apollo 2*. Now they have come out with big hits with *Universal Hero* and *Lap of The Gods* as have **FIREBIRD** with *Olli and Lissa* and *Thrust*. Both of these houses deserve the highest praise, even if they do come off with the odd crap game or two!

Why do popular budget software houses not advertise their new releases?

Thomas Johnston, Carrickfergus, Co.Antrim, Northern Ireland

No-one's perfect! Budget games have always been a mixed bag — but there seems to be a good market for poor games as well as good games on the budget front. Despite consistently poor reviews of late, one budget house we know of is doing 'very nicely thank you' in terms of volume of sales.

Obviously, there is less money to spend on product development when you are only charging a couple of pounds for the finished item, so it's bound to be a matter of 'win some, lose some'.

Read the reviews before buying to avoid disappointment. . . .

LM

48k SPECTRUM

Fed up with ordinary fruit machine games?

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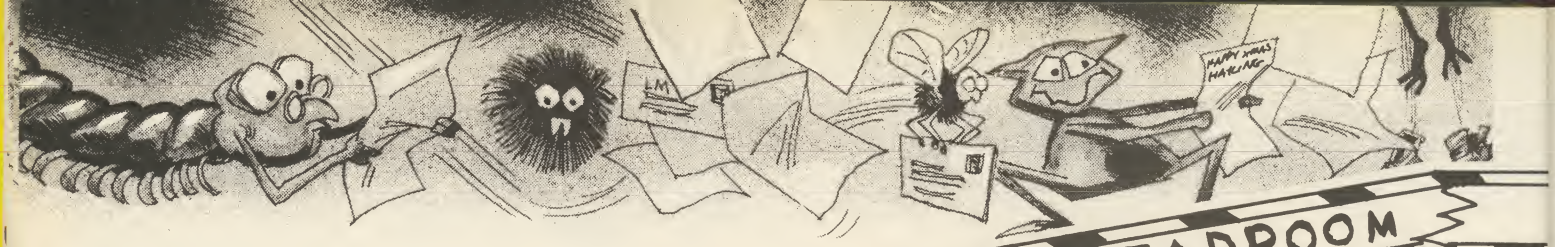

ting our money back. I have enclosed in this letter details about the company. Please could you try and contact them for me since I live in Ireland and find it difficult to get into contact with companies in Britain.

It would also be a good idea if CRASH magazine had a column in it which warned readers of 'Cowboy' mail-order firms and dodgy business practices. I hope to hear news of our money very soon.

Thomas Connolly, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford, Ireland.

Oh dear! It's bad news I have for you. **SOFTWARE WORLD** *has gone into liquidation with debts of over £75,000, and if my experience of such matters holds true in this instance, you now have very little chance of getting all your money back. When a company goes 'bust', any money available to pay out to creditors goes to employees first, secured creditors second and then other creditors, including suppliers and customers, last. Often, only pennies in the pound are paid out to unsecured creditors — and then only if they are very lucky.*

It might be worth your while dropping a line to the person who has been appointed liquidator of _ _ to register your claim — Mr Ian Q Taylor of Smith Dove, 96-98 St James Road, Northampton, NN5 5IZ is dealing with the matter.

Fortunately, the days when 'cowboys' were common in the mail order software market are largely over, but one or two will always be around. It is very difficult for us to report on cowboy activities — often firms keen to rip people off come and go very rapidly. If you order software from an advertisement placed in a magazine and end up being ripped off, you can always write to the magazine that ran the advertisement in question and see what they can do about it.

Alternatively, there's the CRASH mail order service run by Auntie Aggie — or you could try buying products direct from companies that produce them if their adverts invite mail order customers.

LM

MISUNDERSTOOD!

Hello Lloyd!,

I get the feeling that a large number of readers will mis-understand my letter in Issue 34, and think that I'm just slagging the Spectrum off. This isn't true.

I think the best way to explain my viewpoint is to draw parallels with another of my hobbies, cars. I own a 1978 Princess. Now there's nothing wrong with my car — not everyone may like it, it may be getting old, but it still does the job which it was designed to do. Similarly, I own a Spectrum — some people despise them, it's getting old, but it still works.

However, were someone buying a new car today, I wouldn't expect them to buy a Princess, even if it were still available — I'd expect them to buy a car with a more modern style, and more economical performance.

Similarly, I wouldn't expect anyone to buy a new Spectrum. It could be argued that the Spectrum Plus 2 is a better machine, but my own view is that it's just the old Spectrum with bits bolted on. Putting a turbo and a few spoilers on my Princess wouldn't turn it into a modern car.

If the Spectrum Plus 2 had anything fundamentally new about it, it could be considered to be a Montego rather than a Princess, but it doesn't, as I said in my last letter. The biggest sin of all is that the 48K mode is not fully compatible with all the 48K programs.

I have nothing against the 128/ Plus 2 in theory. I agree that the only way forward in a world full of computer buffs with large software libraries, is to build machines which are more modern and efficient, while incorporating emulators so that old software can be used.

However, where the 128/ Plus 2 falls down is that it isn't modern and efficient, and the emulator is far from perfect.

So, I hope his has cleared up any misunderstandings of my letter — the Spectrum is a fine machine — but it is a crime that it is still available as a new machine.

P A Rosbotham, Hedlington, York

A crime! There are a lot of people out there who have yet to experience the fun of owning a Spectrum . . . what's criminal about giving them a chance to join in the fun?

Your analogy about cars doesn't quite hold true I'm afraid. The basic mode of transport for programs, the Spectrum, might be considered a little outdated nowadays, but there is such a thing as a classic car! I've always maintained that it is how a machine is used by programmers that counts when it comes to providing entertainment. In car terms, you could still have a lot of fun driving your old Princess, especially if a competent team of mechanics looked after it and continued to improve its performance.

Take a look at the Starglider *review this issue if you need any more convincing . . .*

LM

POINTLESS LETTER!

Dear Lloyd,

I thought it's about time I wrote a letter to you. So I painstakingly (good word that, see LMLWD) analysed past FORUMs to try and find one indisputable link between all the letters. I found it: it's the fact that they all have points (heavy, medium or light but always points). So this letter will be different: no matter how carefully you scan these words you won't find the slightest hint of a point. No, no point in this sentence! Nor this! Neither this!

Well there you go then, a totally new and refreshing letter.

Tom Evans, Northampton

PS Please print a double-sided photo of Hannah Smith, suitably positioned (knoworimean) OOPS! that's a point.

Refreshing?

Perhaps you're missing the point, and reading the wrong kind of magazine . . .

DEREK HEADROOM

Another year draws to a close, and with it comes the third anniversary of CRASH. The changes I have seen since first setting up my Hermes in the CRASH office and starting work on the Playing Tips column are immense — for one thing the Towers is now bursting at the seams with magazines and people.

The only aspect of CRASH that hasn't improved, to my mind, is my salary. Maybe 1987 will be a good year for me. I hope it is for you. Don't forget, I'm here waiting for your postal missives — and the more I receive, the better my chances of negotiating a pay rise! Write to me at the usual address: LLOYD MANGRAM's FORUM, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1DB.

VOTE FOR THE BEST GAMES OF THE YEAR!

Christmas comes but once a year — and with it, the CRASH Readers Awards. This is your chance to tell members of the software industry what you think of their games, their programmers and their advertisements. Vote for the games, the people and the adverts which you feel are worthy of praise. Fill in the form over the page and send it to us as fast as you can so our Database Minion can get to work analysing the results. The first 10 forms drawn out of the bag on 20th January 1987 — the closing date — will earn their senders £20 worth of software and a CRASH T-Shirt!

The results should be published in the March issue of CRASH and shortly thereafter the certificates of accolade will be awarded to the winning companies. Well then, what are you waiting for? Get to it!

In each appropriate category enter the name of the program and the software house for which you wish to vote. Please note: products must have a 1986 copyright to be eligible. There's no need to fill in every category — if you can't think of a suitable candidate, leave the relevant category blank. Obviously the more you fill in the better the end result will be.

Once you've completed as much of the form as possible, remove this page from the magazine (or photocopy it) and send it to us. Don't forget to write your name, address and T-Shirt size (small, medium or large) on the form in CAPITAL LETTERS!

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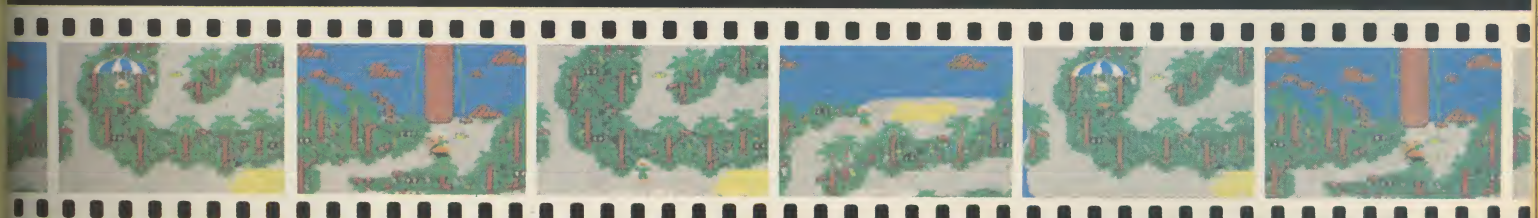

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FOOTBALL F

Nearly £1,900 worth of prizes on offer!

There have been board games about football and there have been computer games about football. But never a football board game which uses a computer. Until now — CDS has come up with *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes.*

The game is for two to five people — each player manages a team of footballers with the aim of making lots of money and leading the footballing world. Having plonked themselves down around a table, one of their number is nominated as computer operator and another as banker. Then the computer randomly generates a squad of footballers for each player.

A deck of footballer cards is included with the game, and each footballer is assigned a playing strength between one (awful) and five (Maradonna/Pele etc). Each player's start-up team consists of one goalkeeper, four defenders, three mid-field men, three forwards, and two utility men who can play in any position.

Once the computer has detailed the individual strengths for a player's team, it's time to hunt through the player cards and assemble the squad. Some money is then dealt to the players and the season starts.

The computer rolls the dice for each player in turn. A counter is moved around a board, and different actions must be taken depending on the square a player lands on. Many involve computer generated random events, and can range from handy to disastrous.

Once all players have taken a turn, matches are played. The computer generates the fixture list, and asks the players to enter the strength of their squads. Each player arranges the players in his possession and adds up their points value to give a total for defence, midfield and attack. The computer then works out a list of results, taking into account team strengths.

Football Fortunes operates in a single Division of twelve clubs and a season consists of eleven matches — fortunately there is no demotion. The name of the game is scoring points (Brian), and to do this, you've got to be successful in the League, or The Cup. After the first season, the clubs go into one of the European contests — Cup Winners Cup, European Cup or UEFA cup depending on their performance last season.

Deals can be made between managers for the loan or sale of players and in times of financial crisis players may be mortgaged to the bank. Landing on one of the Auction squares on the board brings a new footballer onto the market: a card is turned over on the pack and the competing managers bid for his services.

Gate money is shared out between teams each time a match is played and goes into the funds held by each manager to be spent on buying players, or if sudden financial pressures are caused by a player landing on a hazard. The worst financial hazard is wages — landing on the wrong square means the overpaid prima maradonnas have to be paid according to their points value — and they can cost you an arm and a leg.

The game arrives in a neat plastic library case, on cassette, and for £14.95 you get all the player cards, a board, the counters and a full set of instructions. It should be available for the Spectrum shortly after you read this — expect a full review in the February Issue . . .

The complete FOOTBALL FORTUNES kit, as it appears in the prototype. As you read this, the game should be making its way to the shops.

ORTUNES...

Crash Competition

25 COPIES OF *BRIAN CLOUGH'S FOOTBALL FORTUNES* TO BE WON!

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The football-mad fellows up at CDS have agreed to sponsor a sporting holiday of a lifetime . . . they've passed on a cheque for £1,500 to us, which we've lodged with our solicitors. Now all that money is waiting to be claimed . . .

The lucky winner of this competition in honour of *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes* will be able to spend the money being held at our solicitors on a holiday anywhere in the world — so long as they attend a sporting event. If you can bear to wait that long, you could take a trip to the Olympics in Barcelona, but £1,500 should go a long way towards getting you to Seoul. Fancy watching the Superbowl from the stands or The Americas Cup down under?

If you win, it's up to you where you go — we'll do all we can to help you plan your trip and secure tickets, and remember, there's a £1,500 budget to spend, courtesy of CDS.

You might think we'd set a terribly difficult competition to sort out a winner . . . but no! All you have to do is name the last five football teams to win the FA Cup and mention the year in which they won it. Jot your answers down on the back of a postcard and then write a few words, explaining where you would like to go if you win, which sporting event you would attend and why.

The sender of an all-correct entry with the best choice of destination and reason for going will win the £1,500 holiday prize. Twenty five runners-up will be able to try their hand at surviving in the cut and thrust world of football by playing a complimentary copy of *Brian Clough's Football Fortunes*.

So get your sporty thinking caps on and whizz those entries in to **BRIAN CLOUGH, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB before January 1987.**

LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

Another hectic year has all but drawn to a close in CRASH terms, and the last pages of this Christmas Special are making their way from the typesetters 'up' to ART. I am left here putting the finishing touches to my annual review of the year, before I cycle across town to the Grovel Hill headquarters of LM to make my contribution to the January issue. It has been a very busy year, and I forsee even busier times ahead. I only wish my pay increased in direct proportion to my workload. . . .

Without doubt the prevailing trend of 1986 was for coin-op conversions, with the field being led by ELITE (Capcom) and IMAGINE (Konami). As a result of the success of such conversions, Konami have now decided to go it alone, forego licence royalties and capitalise on the immense commercial possibilities of 'sourcing their own product' to slip into the jargon so beloved of the trade.

The trend towards budget games was difficult to avoid spotting during the year. A host of new labels were launched, most of them coming from established 'mainstream' publishers, and most of them turning out mediocre product — although there were a few bright spots on the budget front.

It has been an interesting year, ending with dark rumours that at least one of the giant corporations that have been acquiring smaller software houses (another '86 trend) is planning to leave the market in 1987. Whatever rumblings this move may cause if it takes place, the TV, film, book, personality and toy tie-ins look set to continue almost unabated. The views on licence deals expressed by the CANVAS team in our feature on DENTON DESIGNS later this issue are very interesting. . . .

But on with the appraisal of 1986, a year which saw the departure of Clive Sinclair from the home computer market, and which produced some vintage software as well as some games that have already been cast into the murk of the CRASH Towers cellar, never to see the light of day again . . . some might even argue that they should never have seen the light of day in the first place. . . .

JANUARY

The Christmas Special for 1985/6, which is really the January issue, got the year off to a good start for **MASTERTRONIC**, who collected a Smash for *Spellbound*, scoring a very respectable 95% overall. This was a good beginning to the year for programmer David Jones and his cute character Magic Knight — and it wasn't to be his only Smash of the year . . .

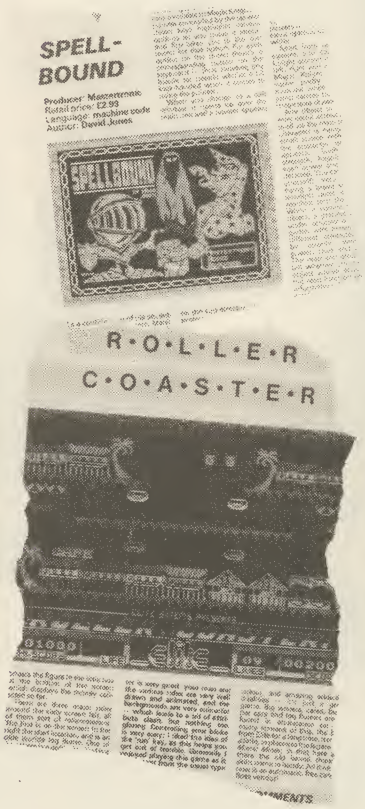
The year also began auspiciously (LMLWD) for Walsall-based software house **ELITE**, who collected one Smash for a surprise game which they were sent from out of the blue: *Roller Coaster*, and another for the first of many coin-op conversions they were to produce during the following twelve months: *Commando*. In fact, **ELITE** had decided to go for a placing in the upper echelons of the software industry during 1986 — and during the year they released a lot of very strong products, concentrating mainly on coin-op conversions.

The end of 1985 saw **MIKRO-GEN**'s brave attempt at improving the Spectrum's capabilities with the launch of the *Mikro-Plus*, an interface that included a ROM, and allowed programmers to write larger games for the basic 48K machine. Sadly, the first (and only) game to appear on the *Mikro-Plus* system, *Shadow of the Unicorn* wasn't anything terribly special. At £14.95 it was expensive; retailers, however, didn't get to make their standard percentage of the selling price — the hardware add-on cost over £4.00 to manufacture — and it wasn't a very attractive proposition to the trade. The whole concept, greeted with enthusiasm in some quarters and as the answer to piracy in others (a *Mikro-Plus* game could only run with the hardware, and each game needed its own special interface), fizzled out rapidly. **MIKRO-GEN** were left with an embarrassingly large quantity of redundant units, and entered 1986 licking their corporate wounds. Innovation doesn't always pay off. . . .

After one of the longest delays in software publishing history (but not the longest!), **PSS** released *Swords and Sorcery* — the innovative dungeon-exploring game they had been working on for an embarrassingly long period of time. Derek Brewster was impressed, and the game duly collected a Smash. Later in the year, Role-Playing purists were to attack *S&S* in the Signpost, but there was no doubt that Mike Simpson had broken new ground and crammed his game with artificial intelligence routines. Still no news, at the end of the year, of the promised expansion modules for dungeon explorers though . . .

Liverpudlian software house **ODIN** followed up their excellent *Nodes of Yesod* with *Robin of the Wood*, a graphically stunning arcade adventure. They then began to put themselves on the software map as the producers of quality games — an epithet that their sister company, **THOR** never quite managed to achieve. Coincidentally, *Robot Messiah* from **ALPHABATIM**, a new company, was also reviewed in the Christmas Special. Early in the New Year, **ODIN** and **ALPHABATIM** were at legal loggerheads over graphic routines — a little dispute that was quickly settled.

Clive Townsend, a newcomer to the Spectrum programming scene groomed by **DURELL**, waded in with his first game *Saboteur*, and collected his first Smash. What a start to a programming career! **INSIGHT** also stepped into the CRASH Smash Hall of Fame with a neat shoot em up, *Vectron*, which was to emerge later in the year as a re-release from **FIREBIRD**. 1986 was to be a year of corporate acquisitions . .



FEBRUARY

Christmas has become a landmark for the software industry. Obviously, people are in the mood for spending money during the festive season, and software houses have always rushed to get their best products on the shelves in time for the shopping boom. Last year a lot of games missed the 'peak' selling period, and to quite a few people's surprise, still sold remarkably well. Again in 1986, games continued selling well throughout the year — we heard reports that even the slump in demand during the summer was hardly noticeable.

The February Issue wasn't short of Smashes. After living on tenterhooks for months (ever since Jeremy 'I want a Zoid' Spencer first talked to **MARTECH** and the **ELECTRONIC PENCIL COMPANY**), we were finally treated to the finished *Zoids* in CRASH Towers. To a being, we were impressed, awarding the game 96% overall. I have spotted one or two voices of dissent in my mailbag since then, but looking back I still maintain that the game was a major achievement. One of the better toy tie-ins, that shines like a beacon above *Transformers*, for instance . . .

The new **IMAGINE**, run and owned by **OCEAN** — who purchased the name from amongst the ashes of the original debacle (LMLWD), also kicked into February with some powerful products. Two coin-op conversions from the Konami arcade achieved Smash status: *Yie Ar Kung Fu* and *Mikie*. **IMAGINE** managed to keep up this pressure throughout the year . . .

An unbroken track record was maintained by **ULTIMATE** with *Gunfright*, which used the same techniques as *Nightshade*, but included a great deal more in the way of gameplay. *Sweevo's World* finally caught up with our deadlines, and was finished in time for a proper review in February — having been treated to no less that two previews in the months before as it neared completion. The game was a gentle departure for **GAR-**

GOYLE — it was more of an arcade adventure than previous releases, so much so that Greg Follis described it as 'a piece of whimsy'. More radical departures from the puzzle-intensive style of programming were due from the Dudley trio later in the year . . .

A frustratingly simple game arrived from Spanish software house **DINAMIC**, courtesy of **GREMLIN**, who also 'imported' *Rocco*, one of three boxing simulations that vied with each other in the Spectrum ring for supremacy. *West Bank* took the reaction-test type of game to its logical limit — all you have to do is press one of three keys to fire through one of three doors presented on the screen. Shoot the right person or object and points are won, shoot the wrong person or a bomb and lives are lost. Almost minimalist in its simplicity, the game proved mightily addictive. As a budget game it would almost certainly have been a Smash, but at £7.95 it earned a respectable 84%.

Regarded by some as the best of the boxing simulations, **ACTIVISION**'s boxing game was endorsed by Barry McGuigan. Although it arrived months after *Rocco* and *Frank Bruno* entered the ring, the extra training appeared to give it the edge. On the adventure front, **ACTIVISION** did particularly well with *Mindshadow*, which Derek recommended heartily to anyone with the vaguest interest in adventuring.

Budget masters **MASTERTRONIC** provided a rapid illustration of the way in which 'cheapies' can vary in quality. They followed up on their Christmas Smash with an appalling little game called *1985* (this would have been more aptly titled 1982), and the more respectable *Soul of a Robot*. It just goes to show that reading reviews is highly important when contemplating the purchase of budget titles.

Two companies that were to fade away quietly during 1986 appeared in FRONTLINE: **CENTRAL SOLUTIONS** who specialised in 'Budget' budget games (most of their catalogue had a retail price of 99p), weighed in with a mediocre strategy game called *Just Imagine*, while **REELAX GAMES** revealed their approach to commerce with *The Trading Game*. Neither impressed our tame strategist, Sean Masterson.

FIREBIRD, who had been quiet for a while, popped out with a retuned, machine-coded version of *Runestone*, which they had snapped up when **THE GAMES WORKSHOP** decided that publishing software wasn't a role they wanted to play.

MARCH

The Ides of March proved favourable for **MIKRO-GEN** — they staged a dramatic recovery from the *Mikro-Plus* setback by pumping three games onto the market and collecting Smashes for two of them. *Sir Fred* was 'imported' from Spain, and the endearing cartoon graphics combined with tricky gameplay had the hero knight trying to rescue his damsel in the middle of a game which became a Smash. *Three Weeks in Paradise*, which proved to be postively the last of the Wally Week games (so it seems, at least) also collected a Smash. Another **MIKRO-GEN** game, an in-house shoot em up vaguely tied in to the TV series behind its title, *Battle of the Planets*, fared slightly less well at the hands of our reviewing team.

The talented team at **DENTON DESIGNS** also paraded two games in front of the CRASH joysticks — the follow-up to *Shadowfire*, called *Enigma Force* and an original, multi-facetted romp featuring sludge monsters and slime beasts entitled *Cosmic War Toad*. Both games missed Smash status quite narrowly.

In fact, Liverpudlian companies featured very prominently in March — **OCEAN** turned in *Rambo* and *NOMAD*, achieving parallel ratings of 79%, while **IMAGINE** released the work of a Hungarian programmer in the form of *MOVIE*, gaining not an Oscar but a Smash.

In fact. releasing games in pairs seemed all the rage. **DESIGN DESIGNER** Simon Brattel completed work on *Forbidden Planet*, which was in effect a follow up to *Dark Star*, and Graham Stafford sent us a production copy of *2112 AD*, the game which starred canine hero Poddy.

Two Commodore specialists also released Spectrum games. *Yabba Dabba Doo* appeared on **QUICKSILVA**'s label and was written by the **TASKSET** programmers, and **WIZARD DEVELOPMENTS**, the company set up by Commodore star Tony Crowther, gave Spectrum owners the benefit of a conversion of *William Wobbler*. They didn't regard it as much of a benefit, it seems . . .

March was positively a month of '2's. Two adventure games were Smashed: *Lord of the Rings* and *Worm in Paradise*, the third part of **LEVEL 9**'s *Silicon Dream* trilogy. Two games came from the **US GOLD** stable, one good one poor — *Winter Games* and *Zorro* respectively. And the World War Two strategy/wargame that put you in control of Britain's airbourne defences during the Battle Of Britain, *Their Finest Hour* was looked at twice, by both Derek and Sean, collecting a Smash from FRONTLINE. **MIRRORSOFT** completed the Spitfire picture for avid fans with the release of their flight simulation, *Spitfire 40*, which zoomed up to the heady heights of a CRASH Smash.

Mel Croucher, the man behind *Deus Ex Machina* and *Pimania* amongst other things, came back from a short self-imposed exile researching into new hardware and the software possibilities it opens up, to produce *ID* for **CRL** — an unusual, text-based entertainment in which the player had to coax and cajole a frightened personality hiding in the Spectrum into revealing details of its past.

A few weak games arrived, including some budget titles and a very tedious football quiz, but all things considered, March was a very good month for Spectrum software . . .

Not a bad month for the Spectrum itself, come to that. We took a look at the new 128K machine Sir Clive launched on the public, and the speculation as to whether it would be a success began. Now that Christmas is here, if the contents of my postbag reflect the real world there is still plenty of speculation about the viability of Amstrad's relaunched 128, the Spectrum Plus Two.

Peter Shilton's

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

APRIL

Whatever 'Old Wives' say about showers during this month — it doesn't hold true for games, although it rained games at CRASH Towers there was only one Smash in the shower. **ELITE** turned in a straightforwad implementation of *Bombjack*, which was devoid of frills but deliciously playable. Not a case of pushing the Spectrum to its limits, but a very entertaining and faithfully executed conversion.

A trio of games from **FIREBIRD**'s so-called 'hot' range turned out to be not-so-hot. Worst amongst the bunch was *Gerry The Germ*, a game full of wit — well alright then, well-worn puerile humour — which lacked in the playbility department and attracted a very lukewarm 45%. The duo behind *Costa Caper*, Messrs Marsden and Cooke (remember *Technician Ted*?) got a bit warmer and collected 64%. 'Hotrangewise' as Herbie *Hyperbole* Wright of **FIREBIRD** might so easily have said, the lead game was *Rasputin*, a jolly 3D romp against the forces of evil.

Star newcomer to the software world during April was Richard Welsh, whose homegrown program Frank The Flea warmed everyone's heart, and earned a very respectable 57% for the novice programmer. We haven't heard from Richard recently, but his last stated intention was to buy a compiler and start writing games that run in machine code.

Julian Rignall, one of the 'Spiky Haired Ones' from ZZAP! who terrorise the Competition Minion, filled a guest slot by looking at the new games released for the 128K Spectrum and found himself gently impressed by the capabilities of the new machine. Praise indeed, from a dedicated Commodore arcadester.

As things turned, the final review for the rather strange surfing game, *Surfchamp* created by Irish software house **NEW CONCEPTS**, was not as disparaging as most people in the Towers expected it to be. Perhaps the psychological effect of using a rather silly-looking plastic surfboard didn't have as detrimental an effect as we first supposed. . . . The **NEW CONCEPTS** advertisement hit an all-time low in terms of artwork standards, while their promotional Sweat Shirts hit an all time high in the office. Isn't life strange?

The new **BUG BYTE**, now owned in name by **ARGUS PRESS SOFTWARE**, chipped in with a couple of budget games, the best of which was the rather tweely named *Sodov The Sorceror* in which you were involved in asking marauding dragons to go away. Well, *Go Away The Sorceror* wouldn't have had much of a ring to it according to **BUG BYTE** supremo, Peter Holme . . . *Roboto* contributed little to the world of budget games, but *Realm of Impossibility* contributed nothing positive to the games-playing world or **ARIOLASOFT**'s credibility. At £1.99 it would have been a very weak title, better suited to release back in the pre-Issue 1 days, but at £7.95 in 1986 it was lucky to collect 10% overall. For the same money, **ARIOLASOFT** were offering *Think!*, a very compelling icon-driven puzzle game designed by **TIGRESS**, or for a pound more you could buy *Skyfox* from the same company — a very competent flight simulator. Perhaps *Realm of Impossibility* was **ARIOLASOFT**'s April Fool joke . . .

Other disappointments for April (apart from Robin Candy's face on the cover and all over his Playing Tips supplement) included a new release from **ELECTRIC DREAMS** who had got off to a reasonable start with *I, of the Mask* and *Riddler's Den*. *Winter Sports* was less than state of the art, and arriving as it did almost in parallel with **US GOLD/EPYX**'s *Winter Games*, a newly formed reputation was dented. *Blade Runner*, from **CRL** was another disappointment — this time for film fans. No doubt the licence was an expensive one, but the product it inspired wasn't . . . well, wasn't inspired.

Overall, April was an interesting month, which saw a wide range of software released including a football league strategy/simulation, a couple of puzzle games, a show jumping simulation (from **ALLIGATA** — who resisted the temptation to get their product endorsed and ended up doing a reasonable job on an offbeat subject), a surfing simulation and a collection of more usual, run-of-the mill release. Most embarrassing game of the month had to be *Transformers*, released by **OCEAN** and programmed by . . . **DENTON DESIGNS**. Not their best work by a long chalk.

MAY

'Never cast a clout 'til May's out' my grandmother used to remind us all. Now we've entered the Binary Age, maybe software houses should update the saying and make sure that they never master 'til the bugs are out. May's games were bug-free, and although rather fewer in number than other months, they tended to be rather higher in quality.

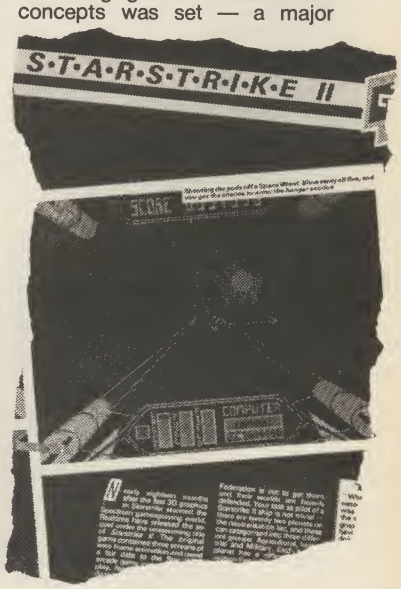
Lead Smash of the month was the eagerly awaited *Starstrike II* from the Masters of 3D (joint holders with Simon Brattel), **REALTIME**. According to Plan A, *Starstrike II* was due for release before Christmas, and the trio at **REALTIME** invested a significant sum advertising the fact. Sadly, as is so often the case, deadlines slipped and the game was ready for release (without bugs) several months later than scheduled.

Nevertheless, it went down well in the Towers, earning gasps of admiration from every reviewer who saw it on the CRASH office Spectrums, it was clearly worth the wait. As I sit in my cramped office penning (well Hermes-ing) these words, all the reviewers in the CRASH office are currently gasping in admiration in front of another **REALTIME** game, this time *Starglider*, released by **RAINBIRD**. They haven't lost their touch . . .

ULTIMATE released their penultimate game for 1986 — *Cyberun*, which duly scraped a Smash and joined another Konami conversion from **IMAGINE**, *Ping Pong* at the 90% mark. *Matchday* programmer Jon Ritman launched his slick 3D version of *Batman* on the world via **OCEAN**, impressing Batman fans everywhere with the gloss and attention to detail invested in the program. And **GREMLIN**'s combat game, *Way of the Tiger* collected a creditable 93% which pleased the firm's boss, Ian Stewart, and meant that the tie-in with Knight Books and the Way of the Tiger series of interactive ninja fiction had paid off. Three companies had very near misses on the Smash front: **DURELL** still haven't completely forgiven us for spoiling their unblemished run of Smashes by awarding *Turbo Esprit* 88% overall; Mike Daniels of **GLOBAL** winced audibly when he phoned in to discover that *Attack of the Killer Tomatoes*, the first of his 'Golden Turkey' film tie-ins, had just been pipped at 89% while **IMAGINE** remained inscrutable about the 88% awarded to their conversion of Konami's *Green Beret*.

Rather unusually, a game from **ATLANTIS** got a double rating! opinion was so firmly divided in the office as to the merits of *Supercom*, a hacking game, that it received 86% overall AND 21% overall. Nothing like breaking with tradition . . .

Another combat game, this time a simultion of the pointy-stick school of Karate, was launched on the world by **MIRRORSOFT** but failed to add anything significant to the genre. *Exploding Fist* seems to be the classic in this field, even today. Another fighting game, this time of the bombs and bullets variety, came from **ALLIGATA**, who dared to upset **ELITE**, holders of the official *Commando* licence, with *Who Dares Wins II* which finally appeared on the Spectrum screen after some legal wrangling. With licences being expensive commodities, the precedent for defending game scenarios and concepts was set — a major



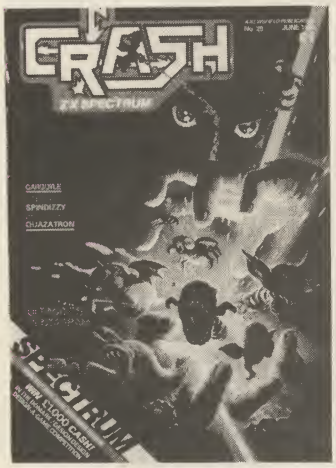
LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

departure from the early days, when I can remember a host of 'clones' appearing around every 'original' idea . . .

ELECTRIC DREAMS set off on the path to film tie-ins with a disappointing rendition of *Back to the Future*, while on the licence front *Max Headroom* broke the barrier to arrive on the Spectrum. Deliciously different, **MARTECH** decided to licence a front — Samantha Fox's — which appeared in pixellated form in *Sam Fox's Strip Poker*. Some commentators suggested that **ARIOLASOFT** should have been awarded that particular licence . . .

The first of the Lucasfilm games appeared from **ACTIVISION** in the shape of *Ballblazer* — another delayed release — but this time one which was greeted with a measure of apathy, and **ATLANTIS** did their best to squeeze the last dribbles of humour out of the C5 in *Revenge of the C5*.

JUNE



Halfway through the year, and the June issue was very thin on the ground as regards licence deals and tie-ins. **OCEAN**'s game about the lizard-aliens that starred in the series *V*, *The Young Ones* from **ORPHEUS** and the belatedly-reviewed *Friday 13th* from gore masters **DOMARK** were the only games that featured characters who had appeared on screens that weren't attached to a computer. There was nothing special about any of the three, and in fact *The Young Ones* was a fair old disappointment.

An octet of Smashes appeared, including the first ever Smash for a 128K game — *Knight Time* written for **MASTERTRONIC** by David Jones (and later to appear in a 48K version). Phil Churchyard, a regular contributor to Playing Tips POKEwise, collaborated with Paul Shirley to produce *Spindizzy* which collected a Smash for **ELECTRIC DREAMS**, and made up for a couple of mediocre releases from the Southampton-based company started by Rod Cousens.

Two adventuresome games collected Smashes, *Heavy on the Magick* from Derek and *Redhawk* from the reviewing team. It looks as if **GARGOYLE** are going to be giving their adventure/puzzle games a bit of a rest for a while as they concentrate on their arcade label, but **MELBOURNE HOUSE** released the follow-up to *Redhawk*, *Kwah* just in time for a review in this Issue. And second time around, Derek Brewster gets to evaluate the caped (or should that be feathered?) crusader's deeds of derring-do.

Mr Masterson took the unusual step of re-Smashing *Desert Rats* from **CCS** when it arrived in 128K form — claiming that he'd forgotten first time around on the 48K version! And the issue concluded with three more Smashes — **ULTIMATE**'s last game of 1986, *Pentagram*, **GREMLIN**'s vertically-scrolling platform variant with yet another ball as hero, *Bounder*, and *Quazatron* from Steve Turner on the **HEWSONS** label.

As months go, June was quite high quality — only five games received less than 60% overall, which indicated that a summer slump in games of quality was going to be avoided this year: as indeed it was.

Large and complicated arcade adventures were flavour of the month during June: **A'N'F** waded in with *Core*, **PROBE** went all robotic with *Mantronix*, and *Glass* programmer Paul Hargreaves completed the monster game *Tantalus* for **QUICKSILVA**.

A pair of sequels came under our reviewers' metaphorical microscopes — they liked *Alien Highway* from **VORTEX**, the follow-up to *Highway Encounter*, but disliked *Mugsy's Revenge* from **MELBOURNE**, which was only saved from a trashing by the fact that a free copy of *Mugsy* was included on the tape.

Despite the awful artwork in the advertisement, *Legend of the Amazon Women* proved to be a passable beat em up from **US GOLD**, while the budget arm of the same enterprise offered the pseudo-mystical *Secret of Levitation*, which failed to rise above the halfway mark in percentage terms.

The Telecom team at **FIREBIRD** went hedgehog crazy with *Spiky Harold*, but failed to take advantage of the licensing opportunity on the doorstep of CRASH Towers — the British Hegehog Preservation Society has is headquarters a few miles away from my home and I regularly encounter its leading light, one Major Adian Coles, as he constructs little ramps for the spiky creatures to use to clamber out of cattle grids . . . **FIREBIRD**'s other June offering, rather late for the event it parodied, was *The Comet Game*, a space romp loosely based on the arrival of Halley's comet — which had turned tail and travelled deep into space when the game was released.

Time and celestial bodies wait for no man, and nor do American Footballers. All the razamatazz surrounding the Superbowl had faded in the memory of Channel 4 viewers by the time **OCEAN** got to the shops with *Superbowl*.

Unexpected arrival of the month award went to **ADDICTIVE** who came to CRASH Towers without Kevin Toms, without *Football Manager* and with *Kirel* a cute jumping game that won the heart of our Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smith . . .

JULY

The summer season began with a quartet of Smashes — and four very different games they were. Over in adventureland, Derek was knocked out by **LEVEL 9**'s *Price of Magik* — a follow on to *Red Moon* — which sends the player on a quest to learn about the mystical arts. Derek insists that each of **LEVEL 9**'s successive releases contain that bit more magic, in terms of what they can do with the Spectrum. Another classic coin-op conversion left the **ELITE** stable in the form of *Ghosts 'n' Goblins*, and marketeers extraordinaire **DOMARK**, finally collected their first ever Smash for *Spitting*, sorry, *Splitting Images*. A very simple, and indeed ancient concept — the sliding block puzzle — gained a new lease of life.

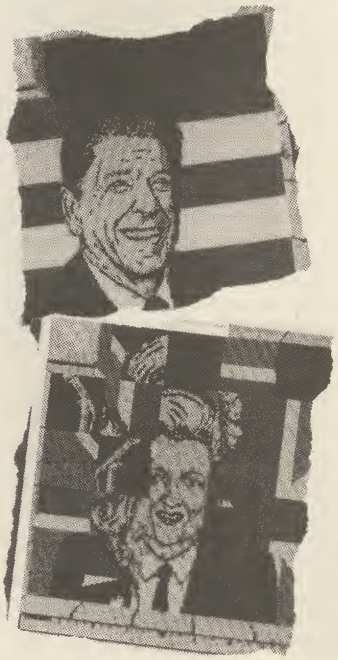
Could **GREMLIN** get the hat-trick? In May they had a Smash, in June another. July came, and with it the terrible antics of a wicked character who could so easily have been the creation of an artist working for THE BEANO. *Jack The Nipper* put an interesting slant on the arcade adventure format, amused everyone and did indeed collect a Smash.

Three games that everyone had great expectations for also arrived this month, and each of them proved a disappointment. *Biggles* from **MIRRORSOFT** certainly hadn't been flying an undercover mission — the game was tied in with the film of the same name, and the level of promotion and publicity which it received meant that few people could have missed its impending arrival. When the game came in to land, however, it proved to be quite unremarkable. After a good six months' delay, **MELBOURNE HOUSE** released *Rock 'n' Wrestle*, which had lost the 'rock' on the way to the ring and, without the endorsement of Big Daddy, had very little to offer. July was also the month that we looked at the game which fell shortest of expectations; the most contentious game of 1986. *World Cup Carnival*. A major licence deal, a large box crammed with 'goodies', a cassette — a cassette containing a marginally revamped football game that originally appeared on the **ARTIC** label and was now very long in the tooth.

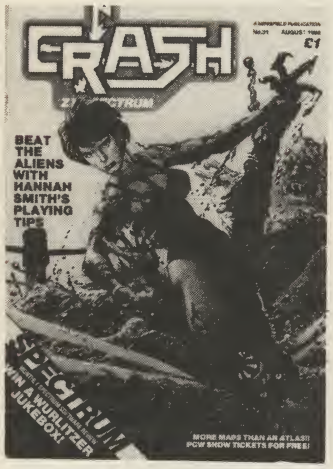
A handful of budget games arrived, most of them mediocre but *Snodgits* from **SPARKLERS** — a sort of detective game — took an unusual approach and proved very playable. **FIREBIRD** entered the budget arena with a combat-decathlon variant *Ninja Master*, and the adventure scene with *Seabase Delta* which somehow captured the imagination of Derek's readers, and was to appear in his letters page on a regular basis over the next few months.

FRONTLINE looked at a pair of games from **PSS**, one good, one not so good. *Theatre Europe*, a game with a rather sensationalist subject, was the better of the pair and seemed likely to encourage players to think about the implications of nuclear war, involving them as it did in making decisions about the launch of nuclear missiles. 'Everyone makes mistakes; this is **PSS**'s' wrote Sean Masterson about *Iwo Jima*. You can't win 'em all!

Molecule Man from **MASTERTRONIC** and *Equinox* from **MIKROGEN** offered quality fare for fans of the arcade adventure, while **MARTECH**'s cunning space game, which was tied-in with an astronomer, threw new light on the arrangement of our universe. *The Planets* managed to combine elements of arcade, adventure and educational games and presented a complicated and slightly daunting challenge to the player who set off on a mission to — yes, at least that part was 'standard' — to save the Earth from destruction.



AUGUST



The summer of this year was nothing spectacular — maybe people kept releasing games because there was nothing more pleasant to do? Whatever the reason, we were flooded with budget titles this month — unfortunately they were mostly uninspiring.

Games involving balls were popular in 1986. Apart from kicking them and hitting them in sports simulations, they also had to be bounced, rolled and jumped through hostile terrain. *Bobby Bearing* from **THE EDGE** rolled out into the Metaplanes this month in search of his cousins and found a Smash on the way, and an anonymous football negotiated fire, nasty sharp pins and boxing gloves amongst a host of other nasties in **MIRRORSOFT**'s flip screen arcade adventure *Action Reflex*.

Pumpkin fans got their chance to strike back in *Cauldron II*, **PALACE**'s sequel in which a cute bouncy pumpkin (nearly a ball, but not quite) had to make his way round a flip screen castle in the best arcade adventure tradition, collecting the wherewithal to depose the evil Hag. Another Smash.

FIREBIRD (perhaps spotting Sean Masterson's favourable comments about an old **RED SHIFT** game, *Rebel Star Raiders* some months ago), launched a revamped version on their budget label and collected a Smash for their trouble. Spotting a gap in the market and then filling it, is without doubt, the route to commercial success!

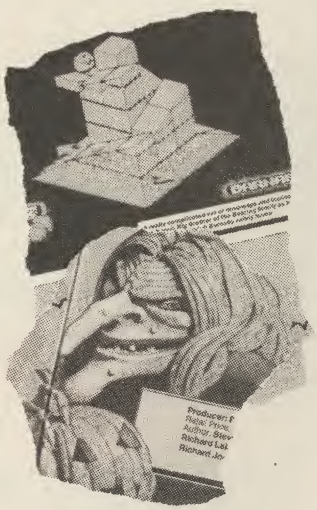
Two quality arcade adventures also collected Smashes: *Pyracurse* from **HEWSONS** in which a large South American temple/tomb had to be explored 'Raiders of the Lost Ark' style, and *Heartland* from **ODIN** who by now had handed over the headaches of publishing games to **FIREBIRD** and were concentrating on writing them.

The first games arrived from the new budget label launched at chateau **INTERCEPTOR — PLAYERS** — they were met with an almost unanimous lukewarm reception, despite the Hip-Hop packaging. Our very own Derek Brewster also met with a poor review for his new game, *Con-quest* which appeared on **MASTERTRONIC**'s MAD label.

A couple of clones poked their noses above the ramparts — ALLIGATA'S **BUDGIE** label turned in a fair rendition of the *Wizard's Lair* theme with *Labyrinthion*, earning 60% overall, while ARIOLASOFT published another game from Dave Harper, *Toadrunner*, which bore a very striking resemblance to his earlier work for **ELECTRIC DREAMS** — *Riddler's Den*. **ELECTRIC DREAMS** themselves gave film tie-ins a rest to release *Hijack*, which puts the player in the role of a harrassed American official dealing with a terrorist incident.

Even though they collaborated with **OCEAN**, US GOLD didn't manage to do a particularly good job on their conversion of the ageing coin-op *Kung Fu Master*, and their second budget release on the **AMERICANA** label, *Subterranean Nightmare* turned out to be a bit of a bad dream.

The rush to budget software didn't appear to be producing anything special, with mediocre products from MASTERTRONIC, **CENTRAL SOLUTIONS** and **ATLANTIS** filling the remaining review pages. . . .



SEPTEMBER

Things quietened down over September, but at last Oli was able to do the cover he'd been waiting to get to grips with, ever since he heard that *Dan Dare* was on its way from **VIRGIN**. Despite repeated requests, the team at **VIRGIN** simply hadn't allowed a single early screen shot out of their programming chamber, and when the game finally arrived it was a complete mystery. . . . Moments after it had loaded it became clear that the game did justice to the cartoon hero and a Smash was on the cards. **VIRGIN**'s other game, *Atlantic Challenger* (which gives the player a chance to control **VIRGIN** supremo, ocean racer and litter campaigner Richard Branson) did less well. Maybe there should have been an arcade sequence in the park with one of those pointed sticks . . . This was a good year for **MIKRO-GEN**, but perhaps a slightly bad month — their new game which introduced 'Teenage Superhero' Ricky Steele missed Smash status by a single percentage point to the disappointment of all down in Bracknell, where Wally Week is in comfortable retirement.

Rod Bowkett's keenly-awaited follow up to *Dynamite Dan* was completed in time for review and lived up to expectations — another fairly straightforward platform game, but one with so many added touches that a Smash was inevitable. And two Smashes were awarded in the adventure world — one for *The Boggit*, a delightful spoof on Tolkien created by **DELTA 4** and published by **CRL**, and another Smash for INCENTIVE's adventure-writing utility, *The Graphic Adventure Creator* which went on to take the homegrown adventure world by storm.

Flight simulator fans were treated to *ACE* by CASCADE, a company whose reputation was founded in the budget compilation market, and which moved towards mainstream games publishing with a very neat airborne combat simulation.

Saving film tie-ins for later in the year, **ELECTRIC DREAMS** went aquatic, producing a whimsical undersea romp by the name of *Mermaid Madness*, and an aqueous version of *Panzadrome* written by **RAM JAM** and called *Xarq*.

Rupert Bear and Dangermouse starred in games from **BUG BYTE** and **SPARKLERS** respectively, but failed to achieve superstar status, while Santa Claus made an unseasonally early appearance in a game from **ALPHA OMEGA**, the budget label created by **CRL**. No-one was likely to leave out a glass of sherry and a couple of mince pies for this Father Christmas. . . .

After the problems they experienced with *The Young Ones*, **ORPHEUS** decided to stop publishing games in their own right, and instead concentrate on providing a programming and conversion service for other companies. *Tujad* had been completed before The Decision was taken, and duly appeared on the **ARIOLASOFT** label, winning some admiration for the graphics, but breaking no new ground as an arcade adventure. French software house **INFOGRAMES** did try to break new ground on the adventure/role playing front, but somehow lost direction along the way with *Mandragore*.

As the September issue was being written, companies were gearing up for the Personal Computer World Show and seemed to be saving the best for their stands . . . with a massive preview section completed, the rest of the CRASH team departed for Olympia leaving yours truly to hold the fort.

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LLOYD MANGRAM'S LOOKBACK AT 1986

OCTOBER

The Personal Computer World Show, as always, was an event and a half where all the leading lights of the software industry paraded their promises for Christmas. C&VG carefully avoided parading Melissa Ravenflame. Despite a hard-fought sticker war, the cartoon tipster failed to materialise leaving the Show floor to our own Girlie Tipster Hannah Smith.

Trivial Pursuit arrived on the **DOMARK** stand at the show, and collected another Smash for the marketeers in the October Issue — after a period in the doldrums (as far as ratings go anyway), **DOMARK** seemed set to make their mark. **ELITE** continued their coin-op conversions, launching *Paperboy* and *1942* — *Paperboy* came remarkably close to being a hit in the ratings, while the general consensus of opinion surrounding *1942* was that it was an accurate conversion of a rather dull game. But **ELITE** wasn't left out — *Scooby Doo*, a different version to the one originally planned in late '85 — collected a Smash. Domination of the HOTLINE Charts seemed to be **ELITE**'s aim . . .

After a fairly long absence from the scene, **VORTEX** bounced back with a ball game from Costa Panayi — an elegant 3D puzzle cum arcade-adventure entitled *Revolution* which completed the trio of Smashes for the month.

Another bevy of budget games scurried in for review and were all poor to awful except for *Lap of the Gods* from MASTERTRONIC, which followed on from *One Man and His Droid* and collected 80%.

Tennis from **IMAGINE** got a poor reception — the best of the Konami coin-ops had already been converted, but the reception that *Knight Rider* received was even less favourable. Despite the interminably long wait (and the release of an early, completely different game through a mail order catalogue) **OCEAN** had very little to offer.

The seeds of controversy were sown in two reviews — *Head Coach* (see the Christmas FORUM) and *Zythum*. **MIRRORSOFT** weren't terribly impressed with our review and felt that we hadn't done the game justice . . . The favourable review *Strike Force Harrier* attracted did little to mollify the affront.

Newcomers **PIRANHA** certainly got their teeth into the software market, kicking off with *Trapdoor* and *Strike Force Cobra* and narrowly missing a Smash with Don Priestley's colourful interpretation of the TV series starring Berk and a host of strange creatures confined below the trapdoor.

The Spectrum Plus Two moved closer to being reality — sample machines had been on display at the PCW Show, but didn't get into the shops until much later. . . .

NOVEMBER

Once again, lots of budget games came under scrutiny, and despite entries from **MASTERTRONIC** and **AMERICANA**, **FIREBIRD** lead the field in terms of quality with *Bombscare*, *Happiest Days of Your Life* (a Wally Week clone — maybe the hero's in retirement but the format still lives), *Olli and Lissa* and *Thrust*. The Telecom team were let down a little by *Kai Temple*, but no-one's perfect, especially in the budget world . . .

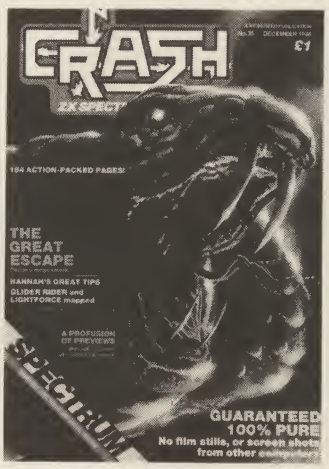
Smaller companies led the Smash field this month — DURELL provided a very unusual 3D game with an equally unusual title, *Fat Worm Blows A Sparky*, GARGOYLE treated everyone to an attribute-clash-free shoot em up, and **CCS** impressed our tame strategist with *Napoleon At War*. INFOGRAMES, though by no means a small company, came very close to a Smash with *L'Affaire Vera Cruz*, as did **GREMLIN** with *Trailblazer* and ARIOLASOFT with the original concept of *Deactivators*.

Street Hawk finally got into the High Street and proved to be a disappointment, but not as great a disappointment as *knight Rider*. *Asterix* was another long awaited game that proved less than wonderful, despite the protracted development time, and **MELBOURNE HOUSE** did nothing to improve their gently slipping image by releasing *Conquestador*, a cute but unremarkable arcade adventure.

Controversy began to rear its head again, when we awarded *Glider Rider* a Smash for the 128K machine, but didn't make a song and dance about it because the 48K game only merited 80%

Another bumper 164 page issue was planned for December, to cram in all the game reviews that we expected to have to cope with . . .

DECEMBER



With Christmas fast approaching, software houses began revealing their prime programs. Out of some thirty games which we looked at last month, only five scored less than 60% overall. **ALPHA OMEGA** somehow don't seem to have penetrated the budget market with quite the right approach — their games have consistently failed to achieve good ratings. More Omega than Alpha, in fact, with *Dr What* collecting a mere 17%

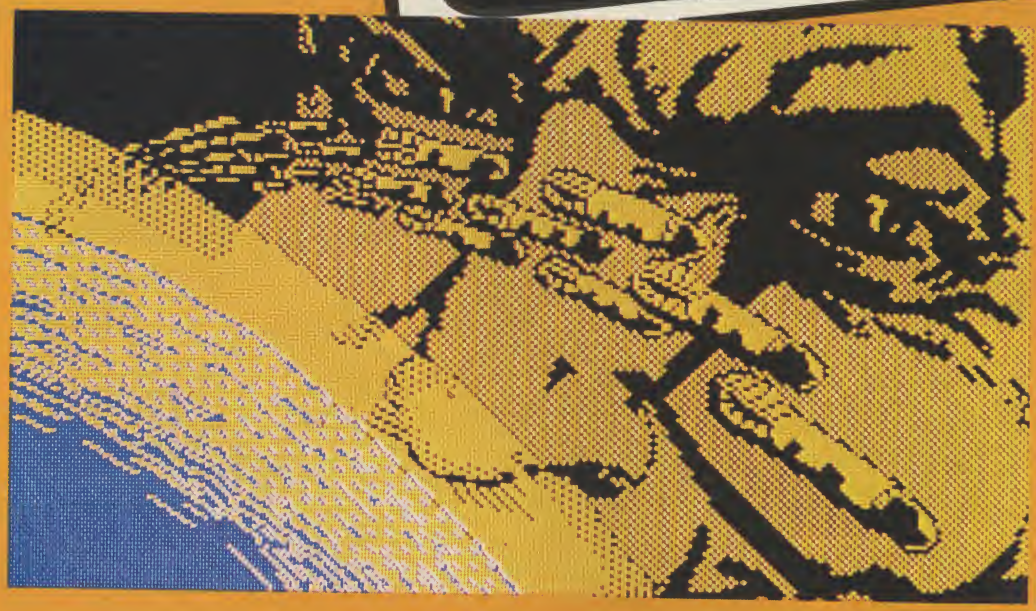
CODEMASTERS entered the budget arena with a pile of titles, which received a warm reception.

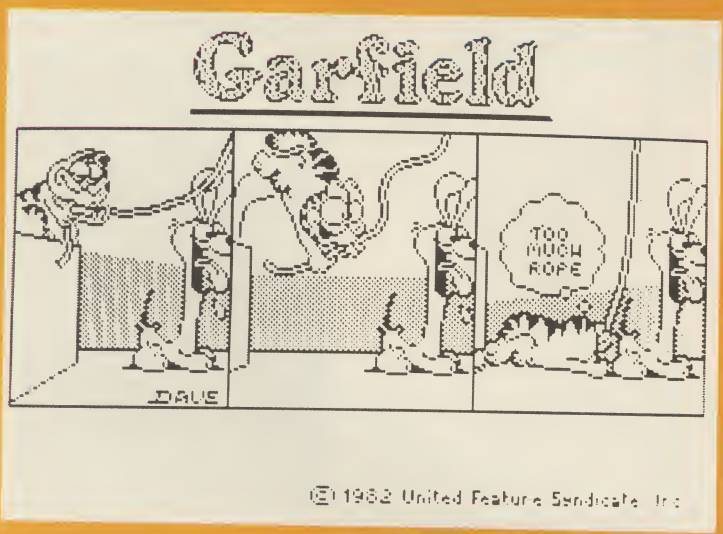
Otherwise no major surprises as promised Christmas games arrived for review . . . Another twelve months of CRASHISTORY was ruled off in the ledger, and the New Year awaited eagerly.

Off the SCREEN

ON THE SCREEN is back yet again by popular request! Once more we bring you a selection of the very best in Spectrum 'artwork'! Loads of piccies came in the past few months, so if you don't see yours here, then try again! Anyway, these are the best of the ones that came in. . . .

David Muir, of Melrose, in Scotland, came up with this interesting piece. The expressionless face looks on speculatively on the missiles that fly over the planet's surface, to wreak who knows how much destruction? Well drawn, although the colour choice is a bit bright.



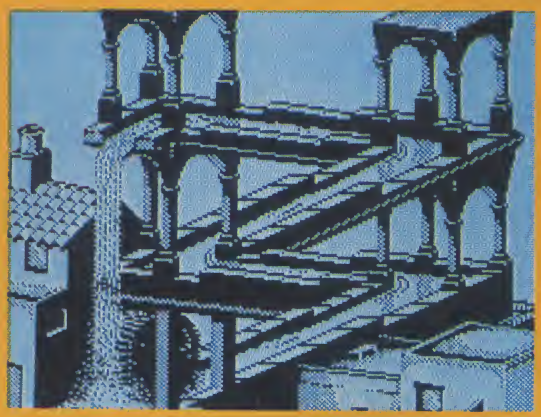


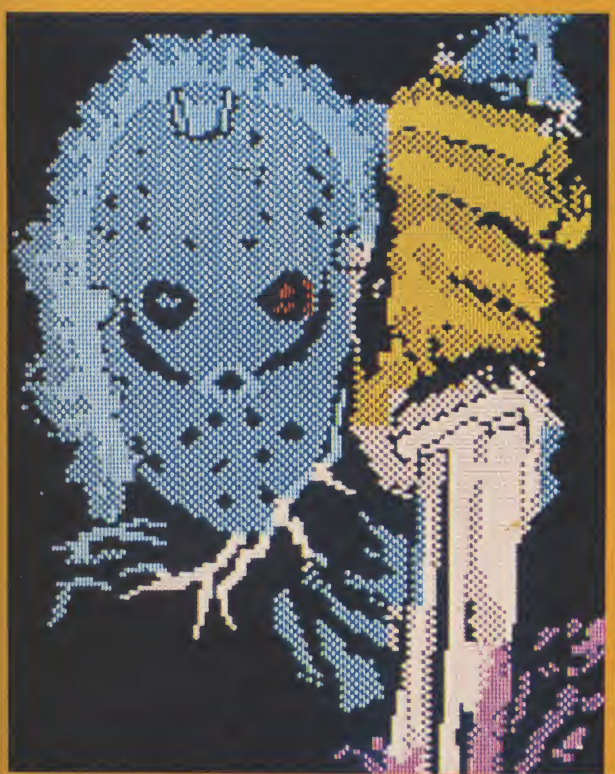
I really like Garfield! Well, who doesn't? This petite cartoon is a simple rendition of everyone's favourite character, and although monochromatic, is very vell drawn, packing a lot of detail into a very small space. Claps and handshakes all round to, David McVeigh, of Belfast.

This picture creates a great atmosphere. With the colourful Earth far, far, away in the distance, the spaceman floats, totally alone, with nothing but a thin umbilical cord separating him from ..? Phil Leese of Chesterfield sent in this one, and the next one, too, came from that same stable..

It looks like the screen beat the game! While still waiting for the finished version of Mike Singleton's alleged megahit, this screen materialised on the Art Minion's desk. David Box, of Bristol, sent this one in, and I thought that this one deserved a mention because of all the excellent detail that the author packed in. (Nice scrolling routines, there, too, Dave!)

Despite the monochromatic nature of this one, I thought that the effect it created was excellent. I was surprised at the way that it translated from the canvas to the extremely low res of the Spectrum. Phil has made an admirable job of the transfer; I spent ages just looking at it and following it through!





A goulish offering from the screen of Tony Hitchcock is this startling rendition of Oli Frey's December 1985 CRASH cover picture Friday 13th. I'm not sure about the purple blood, but the shading and attention to detail is very neat indeed. More than once it has been used to frighten away the rowdier elements from ZZAP and AMTIX when they've ventured into the office. All this gore is from Tony Hitchcock who gets the prize for our furthest flung contributor in Owhiro Bay, New Zealand.

Although somewhat of a cliche in computer artwork, this rendition of a space shuttle from Alan Jones is a colourful and nicely drawn version of this old favourite. The way colourclash has been avoided where the yellow and red tail is against the background of ocean and space is particularly clever. Alan hails from Airedale in West Yorkshire.

That's your lot, then. Keep sending them in, but remember that if you want them sent back, then you have to stamp the envelope that you want it sending back in; and make sure the tape loads! All printed piccies get blow up into A3 in full colour by **RAINBIRD**, makers of the *Art Studio*, who sponsor this page very kindly. Send 'em all into **CRASH GALLERY, P.O. BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE. SY8 1DB.**

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Crash Competition

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Ohmygosh . . . Not a spot the difference (with hopefully some differences marked in?) No. Minion has finally broken the mould of competition writing, and pioneered a new style comp that anyone with slightly nimble fingers and a handful of talent can enter. What you must do is to take an A4 piece of paper (297mm x 210mm) and design an aeroplane by FOLDING the paper to shape (gasp! — what a revolutionary idea, I hear you all cry). Get your entries into the post, to wing their way here by the 20th of January. Lee, Graeme, the Girlie Tipster and I will then take your designs to the local park and put them through their paces.

The paper plane that proves to be best performer in distance and aerobatics will win a copy of the game, and a remote control Veron Vortex glider kit for its designer. The completed kit has a wingspan of over 8 feet and is made from fibreglass. Runner-up prizes will be awarded in order of merit, with copies of *Starglider* and a balsa wood chuck glider kit going to the ten next best entries. There are also forty more mini-glider kits to go to the next best aircraft.

Send your finished entries to **STARGLIDER, CRASH AERODROME, CRASH TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**, to arrive here (uncrumpled if possible, otherwise flat, with detailed folding instructions) by the 20th of January.

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Mike Singleton

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SECTION B

From OCEAN/IMAGINE

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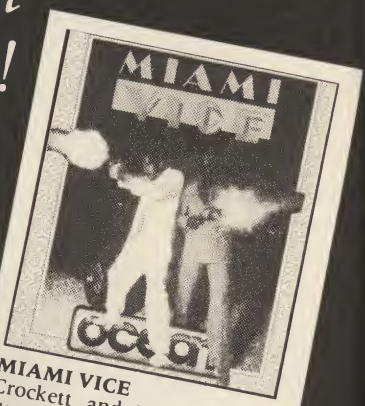
Choose any one of these brand new games!



MIAMI VICE
Crockett and Tubbs hit the streets in this game. Car driving, shooting and crime busting all form part of the action in this adaptation from the smash hit TV series.

MONTY ON THE RUN
A legend in his own mole-time. Monty Mole returns from Wanted Monty Mole in an all action platform game as he tries to make his escape across the channel. Infuriating action with some devious moves — not to be missed by platform addicts.

SECTION A

From GREMLIN GRAPHICS

THE CRASH SMASHES II!

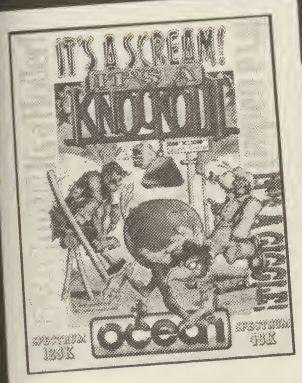
Watch out it's the fabulous four all together on one compilation tape.

SWEEVO'S WORLD
From the Gargoyle Games fun label comes one of the most detailed and compulsive Arcade adventures ever. It's full of comedy, and very frustrating puzzles that'll fill you with satisfaction when completed.

BOUNDER
'B . . . B . . . Bound to be a hit', all original arcade game. Guide Bounder across the dangerous plains in an attempt to reach the goal. Wacky, strange but very complusive action that earned it a CRASH Smash.

STARQUAKE
Bubble Bus's amazing arcade adventure which features the cute hero, Blob. Fly around the world, collect pieces of the planet's core, and assemble them at the centre. All great fun!

TO CRASH!

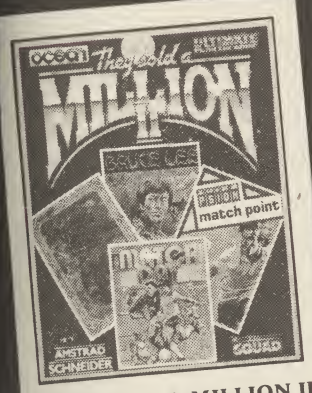


IT'S A KNOCK OUT
Crazy fun as you take part in what must be one of the world's funniest games. Bronte Bashing, Flying Flans and the great Titanic Drop are only three of the events that await you.

HIGHLANDER
There can only be one victor in this timeless battle. Become a master swordsman or perish as your foes grow more skilful. Battle it out — take the challenge!

PART TWO

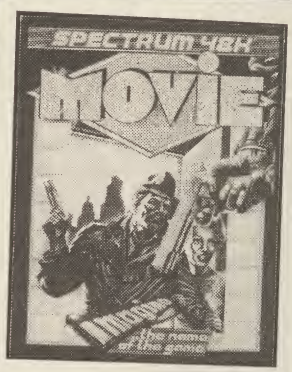
Golden Oldies: Choose one of the two groups



THEY SOLD A MILLION II AND WORLD SERIES BASEBALL

THEY SOLD A MILLION II
A compilation of some of the year's top games; Knight Lore, Bruce Lee, Match Point and Match Day. It's got something for everyone.

WORLD SERIES BASEBALL
The first ever release on the new Imagine label, it earned itself a Smash for such an excellent and compelling game.



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MOVIE
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PLAYING ON THE LEADING EDGE

Our in-house Musical Maestro, JON BATES, casts an eye back over the equipment we've been looking in TECH NICHE this year and comes up with a few recommendations on how to choose, use (and fuse) it!

Judging from several conversations I had about a year ago with people in so-called 'key positions' in the computer and music trade, 1986 should have been the year when quantum leaps were made in home music/micro technology. Well, it didn't quite happen with the big bang a few folks expected, but just wait and see. Mr Kidd waxed lyrical in November about MIDI, and how an easily 'accessible creative concept' for music and sound on your Spectrum gets closer and closer, and of course he is right.

But where does that leave us now? What do we, as ordinary but highly informed people on the leading edge of this technology do? How shall we get ready to greet this new wave?

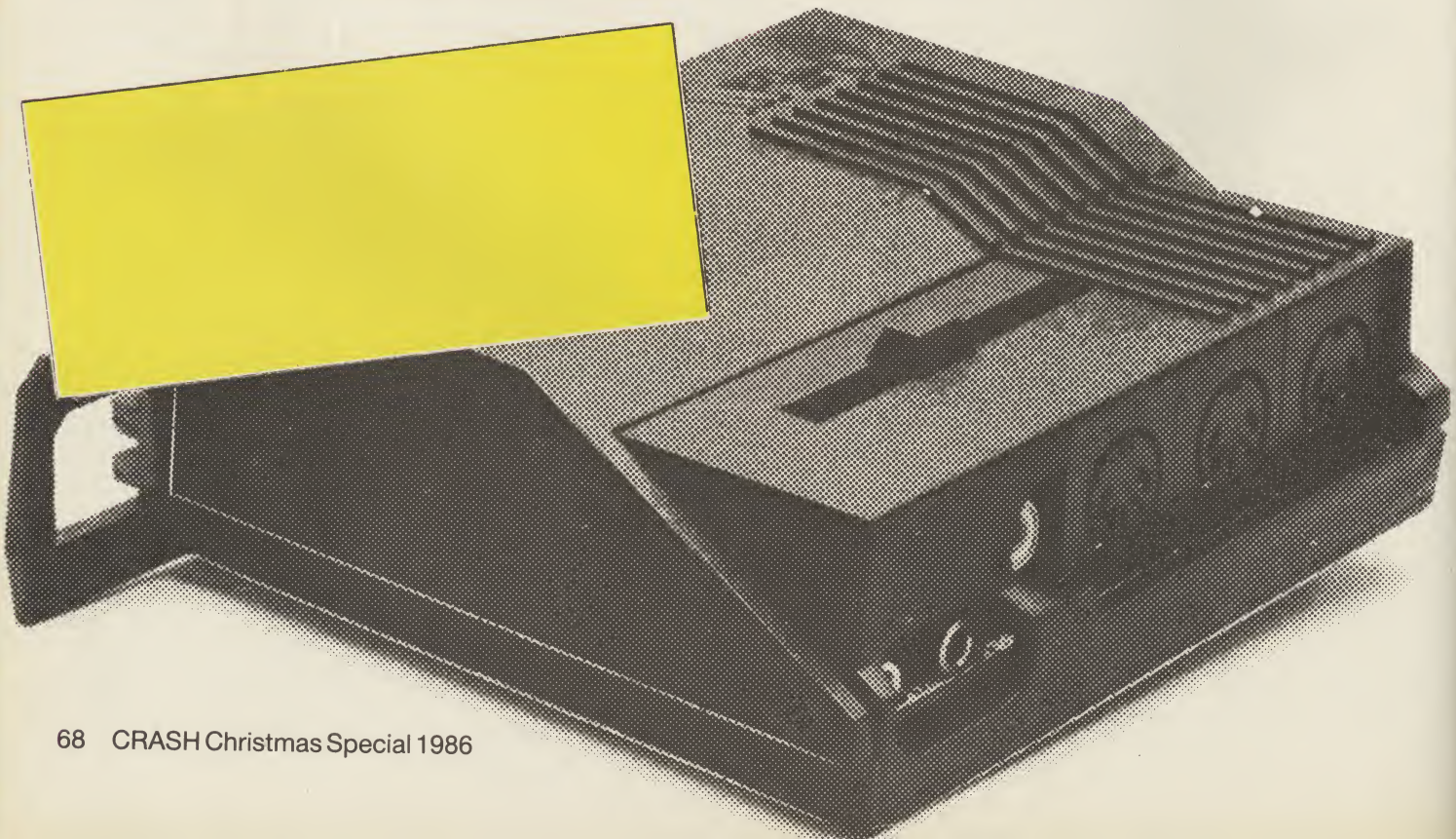
When considering the music modules and keyboards on offer there is a lot to bear in mind. Let me attempt to lay down some guidelines on what to look for in equipment and supporting peripheral devices. Just for good measure, I've prepared a jolly festive list of terms and what they mean — just in case you'd forgotten or are the type who gets phased by eager music-shop salespersons!

MIDI — THE NEW GENERATION

As you may have spotted, I have wittered on about MIDI in TECH NICHE for rather a long while now. Any music interface or music keyboard now must have this facility if it is going to be taken seriously.

Otherwise it can very quickly become redundant as it cannot become part of a larger expanding system. Japanese companies like **ROLAND** and **YAMAHA** have brought out some very smart MIDI processors and control stations in recent months. These enable the user to doddle about with MIDI data streams ad infinitum, and re route and reprocess the origir al information. Now to me, as a computer bonehead, this seems wonderful, but I'm quite sure that to a bespoke Spectrum programmer this is real trivial stuff.

So *Ou est les progams de MIDI avec tout les facilities?* Dans mon pipe dream if I know anything. One of the biggest problems in the whole field of music and micros is that there is a large cultural gap between computer types and music bods. And very rarely do the twain meet. If I put my musician's hat on fair and square, quite a high percentage of programs have real glaring errors that make them musically a non-starter — sort of *muso-unfriendly*. To a micro user with an interest in music the same program could at first appear wonderful. Of course the reverse is equally true in that micro buffs can comprehend data streams, commands and all the associated terminology quite easily. To many musicians this is all Morris Dancing, and gets in the way of actually playing. Someday soon there will be a union of the two camps.



There are several MIDI interfaces about for the Spectrum nowadays. As many as we could lay our hands on have been reviewed in TECH NICHE over the past months. So far, they have all been mutually incompatible — in other words the software from one interface won't run on another. This may make financial sense in the short term, but eventually it will strangle some companies who may be very good in one department, but lose out to a larger company with a wider but less spectacular range of software.

By way of a quick guideline the good old faithful **XRI SYSTEMS** *Micon* interface is still quite good value for money, with several back-up editor and sequencer packages now available, although the Step-Time is slow to use and leaves a bit to be desired graphically. The **EMR** is also quite good on the real-time side, although a bit pricey and with some funny quirks that can cause the program to crash, freeze and generally be quite ill. The interface also supports voiced editing software. The **10** system last month was very comprehensive as a real-time recorder and note editor, but although follow-up software has been promised, none has as yet been seen at CRASH.

As regards an overall music utility, my money so far is on the **RAM/FLARE** *Music Machine*, although it will be interesting to see how **CHEETAH** shape up next year — their MIDI interface is almost ready for release. I have a feeling that there is going to be more than a little competition between them . . . Neither of these companies offer synthesizer editing software as yet.

SELECTING A SYNTHESISER

Obviously, the great thing about MIDI is the ability to hook the Spectrum to synths and tone modules — the latter being the guts of the synth without the keyboard. Now it so happens that the way things are in the synth market, there is not much enthusiasm for the user creating new sounds. This is for two reasons. Digital synths are more awkward to program because they use numbers and lack the old 'hands on' feel with real controls. The second is that the synths only have a 17 (or so) character LCD display in which the user has to 'window' about 70 peripherals to create each sound — even more in some cases. What is more, some peripherals will affect each other. So an interface that supports software to edit the sound of your synth on screen is well worth bearing in mind.

If you're confused let me take an example. The most popular synth in the world (so we are told) is the **YAMAHA** DX7. This is indeed a faberoonie instrument and it comes with two ROMS containing 64 voices apiece. And you hear these more than any other sounds because DX's are absolute piglets to program. To make matters more depressing, you can only dump the voices you have created in two ways. One is via MIDI to a storage device or you can invest around £60 in a **YAMAHA** RAM or cassette for cheap and easy storage. The same goes for drum machines which are often not too easy to program. The **CASIO** range of CZ synths suffers with the same heartaches and they have even less storage space available. A **CASIO** editor and voice dump with an additional 90 voices is available from **XRI** to make life a little better, though. The **CASIO** CZ101 is a reasonable buy at £295, and it has the ability to talk in four voices at once as well as being able to produce some pretty neat sounds.

It's sad to say that the British market is sadly thin and sparse compared with that of America. Because of the proliferation of certain micros and the greater market over there, the USA enjoys a wide variety of editing software and hardware, together with many other clever devices and compositional aids.

SOUND LIBRARIES

With an interface, software and Spectrum the task is actually fun. The **XRI** and **EMR** interfaces will both support editing and voice-dump software so your library of sounds can be created on screen and them dumped to Microdrive

TONE MODULES

One further thought is that if you are not particularly bothered about playing from a synth keyboard you could just buy a tone module. Some of these can be programmed from Spectrums, some simply can't, or rather there is not a sufficient market to support the development cost of the software. Most synth manufacturers make expander modules, but check to see if the one you want can be programmed from your interface. If you are really fanatical, **XRI SYSTEMS** claim to make up software tailored to your needs — but expect to pay a reasonable fee for it.

MIDI is still in its infancy but expect to see a far greater variety of utilities for synths and micros in the near future. The MIDI specifications offer a lot more than we have seen so far, including automated detuning and retuning, stereo panning, reverb and echo, multi-tasking from a single command, filtering, altering commands — and theoretically, all this can be done even with only one keyboard and suitable software and hardware.

Just as this issue was about to go to press, more news from **CHEETAH** arrived — they're about to launch a 'slave' keyboard that can be linked to the Spectrum via their MINI (not MIDI) interface, which allows the musician to edit and create computer generated sounds. It's a polyphonic unit with MIDI out, a five octave range and pitch bend facility. All this for a basic price of £99.95 and an extra £29.95 if you want the MINI interface. With luck, I should be able to take a closer look at **CHEETAH**'s *MK5* keyboard next Issue . . .

GETTING IT DOWN ON TAPE — A Bozo's Guide.

The slick way to do it is to have one of the 4-track cassette machines which give you plenty of scope to overdub. However this could be beyond the budget of a lot of people, so the thing to do is to get the sequencer to take as many tracks as the program will allow. When it's all edited up and in good order, record it directly into your cassette. Try to avoid recording with a microphone at this stage as it will induce more noise, unless of course you are singing as well. Don't unless you are really desperate, use your data recorder as an audio recorder — these usually have a frequency response known only to British Telecom phones.

Go for the best tape you can afford, not old data tapes. If your machine will take chrome tapes then use them — they have a very low level of background hiss and take a lot of stick in the volume department. Always check your sound levels so that at its loudest your piece just about gets into the recording level meter's maximum. LED's are better than VU meters which are a bit slow on the fast, loud sounds that often come from computer-generated music. Keep all audio leads away from transformers, TV's and other sources of hum like fridges, microwaves and fluorescent lights. Check your leads every now and again to make sure they are not broken or mutilated.

All recordings benefit from a little reverb. It gives them a more lifelike sound rather than a bone-dry hard sound. If you can hook up a second Spectrum with sampler you could use the reverb option on the second system. Beware, most of them are noisy and don't give a true reverb effect. It could be down to borrowing a dedicated unit which will probably do the job more efficiently and with less noise. The real McCoy is a MIDI-interfaced Digital reverb unit which can be linked up to your sequencer and told what to do and when, all in real time on playback.

FIZZ, BANG, FRAZZLE

One other point as the Christmas tree lights fuse themselves and yourself out of existence — most recording gear and amplifiers can survive very nicely thank you on a 2 amp fuse. Have a look on the back of the gear and you will see the power marked somewhere in watts. Divide this by the number of volts on supply and presto, the amperage rating.
So my synth, which by the way is pretty hefty, consumes 110 watts, supplied at 240 volts which means that it only uses 0.45 of an ampere. Most 13 amp plugs come complete with 13 amp fuses, so should something go amiss it would take over 26 times the fuse rating I should have before a 13 amp would blow. Get the idea? It's not very well protected. (Neither are Sinclair transformers — they have no fuse in them at all! Read your User Guide).

SAMPLING — THE PROBLEMS SO FAR

Well there are several. Owing to the limitations of the sampling rate, which in turn is limited by the amount of memory you have to play with, the sampling — the rate at which it listens to the sound and chops it up into bytes — is slow by the standards laid down by dedicated samplers. Therefore the reproduction can be marred, especially at higher frequencies. This means that lots of thought should go into the design of the internal filtering, chips and thingies that remove the hiss and smooth the sound out.

As yet Spectrum-based samplers still suffer with background hiss. So far, no-one has got the 'Loop' facility quite right. A true 'Loop' should be seamless. You should be able to hold down the key and the sound should go on endlessly and smoothly. Sadly this is not the case, and it does rather render the micro sampler into the novelty category as yet — reducing looped choir and string effects into a chorus of machine guns. I stress 'as yet' because the soft and hardware houses are beavering ▶

away to correct this.

MARKET RESEARCH

I do wonder, though to what extent they actually carry out market research. Also, I wonder how hard they look at dedicated sequencers and samplers from a user and end-product point of view to see how their own programs can best be presented. The actual mechanics of the hard and software may well be fine, but in some cases the user is left stranded with a lack of finesse in the facilities, as in the DATEL Sampler reviewed by yours truly in this month's TECH NICHE.

Having got your sampler, what are you going to do with it? As per the guidelines, go for one that can be incorporated as part of a sequencer system, preferably MIDI. This means that your sampled sound can become part of a creative piece of work and you can build a whole vista of new sounds into a composition. The great thing is that it does not rely on manual dexterity — just a pair of ears and a fertile imagination.

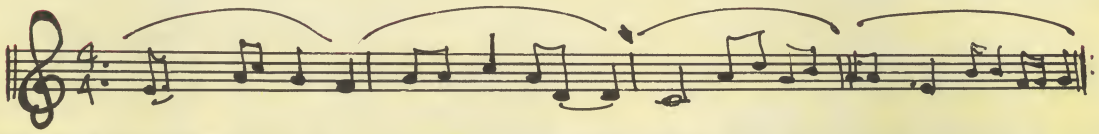
Sampling the actual sound. First step. Throw away the 30p microphone that comes with the sampler and beg or borrow a superior one. With care, samplers should accept a direct input from a line source — the line out socket from a tape or record deck. The *Music Machine* took umbrage at this and reproduced a loud nasty hum rather than the sound desired — the DATEL actually has a separate line input channel.

TAKING SAMPLES

After you've giggled your way through sampled raspberries, flatulence, Frank Brunospeak and Mickey Mousespeak, you may get more adventurous. All sorts of sounds can be used — at different pitches the sound changes completely. You could try sampling home-made sounds — blowing across bottles, tapping glasses, saucepans, tins or slamming doors, twanging rubber bands and so on — or use any musical instrument that is lying about. Sound effects records can be borrowed from the local library and clips from records can be pressed into service. Here a little bit of care is needed as it is really better to get a note that is one pitch for the duration of the sample. With patience it is possible to isolate different instruments and voices, so that files of choirs and orchestral sounds can be built up. The cheeky approach is to either sample sounds from another dedicated sampler or to pinch one of the audio cassettes that accompany low budget samplers. Again you are only hindered by the limits of your own imagination.

YE OLDE TRADITIONALLE LISTE OF MUSIK TERMES

(AS USED BY SYNTHESIZERE KRAFTSMENE) (ABRIDGED)



AFTERTOUCH: The modification of a sound when the keys of the synthesizer have been released.
ANALOG: Usually a term applied to older synthesizers that use electricity (voltage) as a means of creating and controlling the sound as opposed to digital sound creation by computer.
CLEF: Sign at the beginning of the five lines of music indicating whether it is high or low in pitch — in truth it indicates which line or space is G,F or C.
ECHO: The definite repetition of sound.
ENVELOPE: The shape of the sound in volume and how it changes as the sound continues.
EQ/GRAPHIC EQ: Short for 'equalization'. A highly advanced set of tone controls that can select a small part of the audio frequency and boost or cut it as required. 'Graphic' equalisers have all the sliding controls on the front and they're the most popular.
FM: Short for Frequency Modulation — a way of synthesis used primarily by YAMAHA. One wave form affects a another to create a complex sound.
LOOP: Repeating all or part of a sampled sound, usually without the join being noticed.
MIDI: Musical Instrument Digital Interface. A universal standard for digital communication between digital instruments and/or computers on many levels.
MODULATION: Modifying one sound by adding another waveform to it.
MONOPHONIC: An instrument that can only play one note at a time.
NOTE: One sound defined by a particular pitch and length.
OVERDUB: A term used in recording. A second or subsequent recording added on top of an existing one to enhance the original.
PATCH: The settings required by a synthesizer to create a particular sound.
PITCH: The height or depth of a note measured in frequency — sometimes related to the footage that would produce the same pitch from an organ pipe.
PITCHBEND: Raising or lowering the pitch of a note, usually only by small amounts. Often achieved with a variable control on an instrument.
POLYPHONIC: Capable of producing several notes and pitches simultaneously.
QUANTIZE: 'Rounding up' — a processor 'listening' to a real-time recording, and sorting the timing of the notes to the nearest part of a beat — depending on what has been pre-selected.
RAM: Random Access Memory. Usually a cartridge that can be reprogrammed by the user for patches or sounds/rhythms and so on.
REAL-TIME: Recording the events/notes as played.
REST: A designated period of silence in the musical part measured the same way as the notes.
REVERB: Short for Reverberation. Gives the same effect and ambience that can, for example, be obtained in rooms and halls of differing dimensions.
ROM: Read Only Memory. Usually a cartridge that contains factory-set sounds or programs.
SAMPLING: A Means of digitally recording sounds that can then be processed and reproduced in a modified form, becoming a sound source in themselves.
SCALE: A pre-ordained order of notes that can form the basis of a piece of music.
SEQUENCER: A device that records musical events by means of memorising the information required to produce each note or event.
STEP-TIME: A sequence of notes programmed individually.
SYNCHRONISATION (SYNC): Running two or more devices interlocked by a common code; eg tape recorder and synth, drum machine and synthesiser.
TEMPO: The speed of a piece of music, expressed either in musical terminology or in specific beats per minute.
TIE: A musical sign that joins two notes of the same pitch together producing a longer note.
TIMBRE: The quality and tone of a particular sound.
TIME SIGNATURE: The number of beats per musical bar at the note value of each beat.
VOICE: Another name for any sound that a synthesizer can produce.
HAPPY CHRISTMAS: A common greeting, heard mostly at this time of year.

Graham Gooch's Test Cricket 579 and won by an innings and 202 runs
Pole Position 45,500
Who Dares Wins II 10,370 and into area 3
Knight Rider 9,350 completed all missions and 1 random plot
Sai Combat purple sash
Winter Games Ski jump 200.07, speed skating 38.3
Stephen Shepherd, Corby, Northants

Jack the Nipper completed
Stainless Steel completed
Paperboy Saturday
Green Beret completed
Never Ending Story completed
Back to Skool completed
Dynamite Dan II Third Island
Dan Dare Sector Five
Ghosts 'n' Goblins completed
Samantha Fox Strip Poker All pictures
Knight Tyme completed
All **Wally Week** games completed
Rambo completed
Monty on the Run completed
Commando Area 31
Phillip Lees, St Helens, Merseyside

The snow falls on the heads of the innocent and guilty alike. Shoppers in the sleepy market town of Ludlow are covered with gently falling snowflakes, just as the miscreants strung up on the gibbet are touched delicately with the frozen fingers of the sky's precipitations.

There, it's Chrismastime and I'm getting all lyrical. See you all in 1987 with more Slimesters, so long as the Ludlow Mafia don't try to renegotiate the gibbet contract again. . . .

Starquake completed
Lords of Midnight completed
Full Throttle 1st
Paperboy Saturday 31,631
Glider Rider 4 Domes destroyed
Rambo completed
Arcadia level 100
Dan Dare completed
Tir Na Nog completed
Dan Durach completed
Marsport completed
David Glynn, Bolton

Finders Keepers completed
Spellbound completed
Knight Tyme completed
Hunchback completed
Streethawk 300,000
Movie 17%
Jack the Nipper completed
World Cup Carnival kicked into bin
Devils Crown two belts
Jaws Skwallus & Paul Jaines, East Lindsay Itec, Manby, Lincs.

Paperboy completed
Matchday 8-0 in final
Commando area 8
Rambo completed level 2
Gunfright 8th Bandit
Underwurlde completed
Split Personalities 10th picture
1942 4th ship
Scrabble completed top on all levels
Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Airwolf completed
Mugsy 78%
David Lazenby, Castleford, West Yorkshire

Bombjack 1,319,250
Mikie 333,400
Turbo Esprit 12,410
Mooncresta 35,410
Jet Pac 72,810
Gyroscope 3,270
Snowman 32,670 (greatest game on Earth)
Ghosts 'n' Goblins 127,400
Chris Cartmel, Glenrothes, Fife

Atic Atac completed
Chukie Egg 11th Level
Batman completed
Spy Hunter 691,425
Underwurlde completed
Way of the Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Ghosts 'n' Goblins completed
Hobbit completed
Sabre Wulf completed
Jet Set Willy completed
Jason Collier, Canton, Cardiff

Bruce Lee 1,706,075 completed 32 times with 15 lives before pulling the plug
Starstrike completed
Harrier Attack 39,060 completed
Sai Combat 7th Dan
Spy Hunter 339,630
Dangermouse completed 4 times
Chukie Egg 239,670, level 22
Mikie completed
Frank Bruno completed
Trans Am 8 cups
Bombjack 493,760
Dynamite Dan completed
Alien 8 completed
Tir Na Nog completed
Exploding Fist 10th Dan
Manic Miner completed
Saboteur completed
Dun Darach completed
Steven Hunter, Welton, Nr Lincoln

Dynamite Dan II 3rd Island 4,750
Ghosts 'n' Goblins Area 3, 609,160
World Series Basketball beat Spectrum level 4, 8-10
Jack the Nipper Little Horror
Knight Tyme completed
Mark Tyler, Great Barr, Birmingham

Batman 2,348
Green Beret 10,300
Split Personalities completed 235,000
Paperboy completed
Dynamite Dan II island 3
Mikie gym
Hypersports 5 times round (with friend)
Back to Skool freed bike
Skooldaze completed 23,100
Rebel Star beat computer on level 3
Jack the Nipper Namby pamby!
Matchday won 1-0 on International Level
Chris Counsell, Hedge End, Southampton

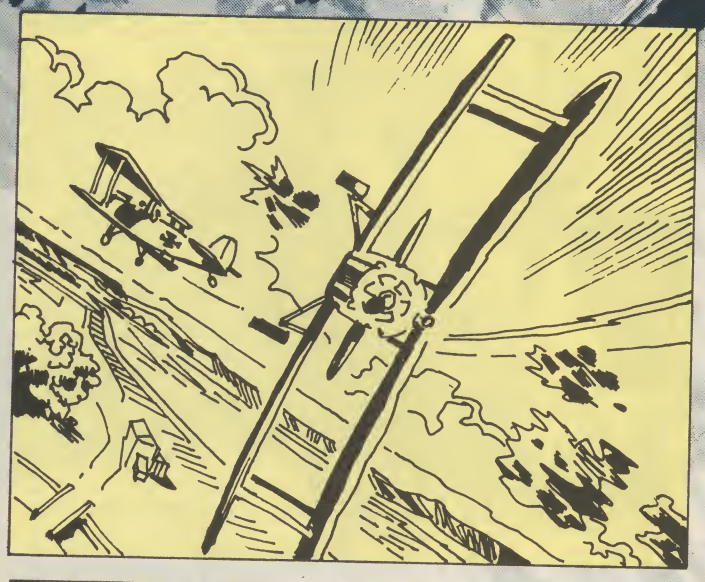
Ghosts 'n' Goblins 418,000
Kung-fu Master level 3 56,000
Commando area 19
World Cup Football won World Cup
FA Cup won Cup 3-0
Moon Cresta 37,000
Yie Ar Kung Fu 158,500 level 18
Mikie 3rd time through
Barry McGuigan beat Barry, yahoo!
Bombjack 201,000 13th time round
Starquake completed
Green Beret level 3 bridge
International Karate done all countries
Hypersports 301,000, 5th time through
Dynamite Dan completed
Dynamite Dan II 2nd Island
Paul Pearson & David Minskip, Cross-gates, Leeds

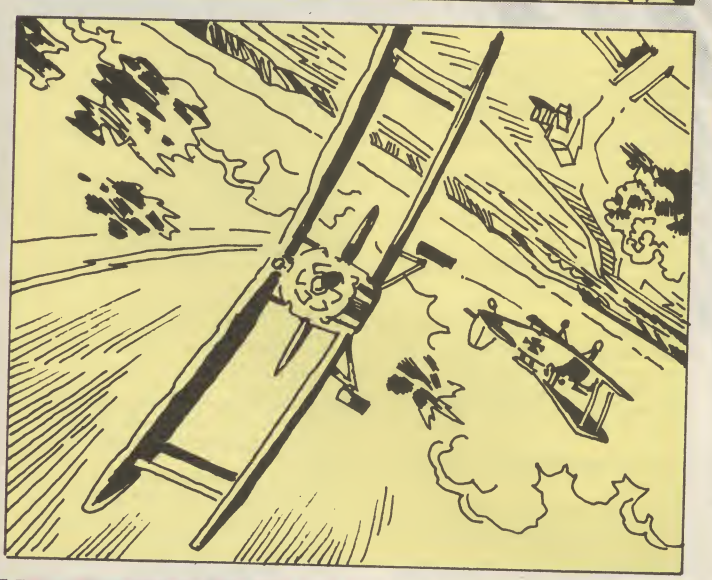
Split Personalities level 7, Charles and Diana
Bombjack 640,000
Rambo 86,000 on hard level
Commando 150,000
Knight Lore 80%
Manic Miner completed
Jet Set Willy completed
The Wild Bunch Top Grade Hero 10,000, £10,000
Frankie Goes to Hollywood BANG! 98%
Jetpac completed 4 times
Starion Grid Master
Rifle Range 750 points
Monopoly 30,000 pounds
Daniel Mattsson, Bornholm, Denmark

Paperboy completed 56,550
Ghosts 'n' Goblins completed
Knight Rider all five missions. (na-na-na-na-na)
V completed
Commando level 24 (only a tiny POKE)
Rambo completed (they pushed me)
Green Beret completed (Look no POKEs!)
Saboteur all nine levels
Ghostbusters closed portal
Barry McGuigan's Boxing beat Barry
Manic Miner completed (no POKE)
Hypersports 3 times round
Back to Skool completed
Knight Tyme completed (I didn't use a POKE there)
Underwurlde completed (oh, yes I have!)
Beach Head I and II completed
Ping Pong beat CPU on level 5
Knight Lore completed
Atic Atac completed
Trans Am completed
Monty on the Run completed
Tapper Space Bar
Sabre Wulf completed
Buck Rodgers Level 8
Jamie Burns & Edwin Jolly, Leicester

GO FLYING WITH DURELL!

WIN A RADIO CONTROLLED AEROPLANE AND TAKE TO THE SKIES





Crash Competition

25 Runners up can choose between *Deep Strike*, *Thanatos* and *The Big Four* Compilation

In **DURELL**'s new game *Deep Strike* you are firmly sat in the business end of a bi-plane fighter in the First World War, flying in formation. It is your task to protect the bombers in the group — you're on a mission to shake up the enemy ground forces. Not surprisingly, this involves lots of dogfights with enemy planes: **WHEEEEEEOW! DAKKA DAKKA DAKKA BOOM!** '*Enemy fighters at nine o'clock, Johnny!*' **ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK ACK-ACK-ACK! KERBOOM!** '*Jolly good show, chaps!*'

And so on. . . .

Great stuff! I've always fancied myself as a dashing Air Ace hero, with handlebar moustache, glamourous white scarf and the adulation of all the local lady Minions. Sadly, it is not to be — but maybe I could pretend for a while if I can set up a computer in the broom cupboard away from the jibes of the Girlie Tipster and the boots of our Doc Martened bossman. I could really get into playing *Deep Strike* . . .

But I digress. You want to know what you have to do to win your own pair of radio controlled wings, don't you? Yes you do. Right, it's quite simple really. All you have to do is spot the differences between the two pictures of an aerial combat sequence, seen on this very page. Then cut out the form (snip snippety snip snip snip), pop it into an envelope (plop), think of hamburgers (mmmm) and use all the saliva that's collected in your mouth to seal the flap. Attach the whole lot onto the leg of an air-mail carrier pigeon and send it to **DURELL DEEP STRIKE, CRASH TOWERS, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive by the 20th of January 1987. Alternatively, you could always use the traditional postal method of stamp-and-letterbox . . .

First correct entry out of the bag wins the sender a radio controlled plane, and 25 equally lucky runners-up are in line for a **DURELL** game, either *Thanatos, Deep Strike* or *The Big Four Compilation*, featuring *Turbo Esprit, Saboteur, Critical Mass* and *Combat Lynx*. The choice is yours . . . if you win!

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WIN! A SONY WALKMAN!

5 COPIES OF FIRELORD IN A CASSETTE RACK UP FOR GRABS!

25 RUNNERS UP TO RECEIVE A COPY OF FIRELORD AND A POSTER!

HEWSON are rightly proud of their latest Smash *Firelord* which has you ensconsed in the land of Torot. Naturally enough, you control the hero, Sir Galaheart the brave Firelord. He's searching for the ingredients needed to make the Spell of Eternal Youth which he can use to trade with the evil Queen who is dominating Torot. She sweet-talked a dragon into giving her the Firestone and has gained the power to hurl fireballs around at will — much to the consternation of the downtrodden peasants.

An Eternal Youth spell could go down remarkably well at CRASH Towers. If I had one I could make some nifty trades with the hacks in the CRASH office.

Just think — the Doc Martened One would be able to go back to the days when his waistline, like his age, was under 30, and Old Flatulence Bitter cost pennies a pint rather than pounds. As it is, the poor fellow is waiting in the queue for the bathchair used by the editor of AMTIX!. Mr Kidd would be more than pleased to be able to zoom around on a BMX bike again.

As for the Girlie Tipster, Hannah Smiff, well she'd be able to sproing round with carefree abandon knowing that a whole host of umbrellas could still be lost and endless square yards of office floor still remained to be covered in mess. She could abandon her diet of Spring Water and lemon Perrier — and maybe even splash a drop of the elixir on her collection of houseplants and make them green and planty again, rather than brown and wilty.

Ben Stone, the office poser with more labels than an addressing machine doesn't really need a dose of eternal youth as he's far too bouncy as it is. Skipping in to work in the morning adorned in designer clothes, the ever-youthful Ben would probably regress to playschool days if he got he merest whiff of potion. Maybe Young Stone would go down well with all the motherly types at software houses and we'd get lots of special deals to pass on. Mind you, no-one would particularly relish changing his nappies . . .

And Lee Paddon might look young, but his appearance is merely a wonder of modern science — after years slaving away on an obscure journal all about giant electrical transformers and a spell on Your Computer, he came to Ludlow and suddenly found he had to look young and dynamic to keep up with Stone and Spiky Haired Ones in the ZZAP! office. He could save a fortune on the monkey gland treatment he spends half his wages on — and would certainly save a splash or two of potion for his motor car, so it could be rejuvenated to that factory-fresh gleam it once had many years ago.

But what do you have to do to enter this competition? Give me a list of what each member of the team would offer in order to be (or not to be) the owner of the youth-giving brew. Remember, each member of the CRASH staff can only offer me one item in trade for the elixir — and there's only one dose of the potion, so you must also give me the reason why you think that particular person should receive it.

The bestest entry, in my humble Minion opinion, will win the sender a Sony Walkman with extension speakers together with a copy of *Firelord*. The next five entries, in order of merit, will win the senders a copy of *Firelord* plus a cassette rack, and 25 runners up will collect a copy of *Firelord* plus a poster! Wowee!

Send your entries on nothing bigger that A4 (which is 210mm x 300mm) to **YOUTH CLUB, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB** to arrive here no later than January 20th 1987.

MEL CROUCHER begins a long-running saga detailing the adventures of a Fast Food Salesbeing of the future — TAMARA KNIGHT.

Throughout 1987, Tamara Knight's adventures will grace the pages of ZZAP! — but seeing as it's Christmas, there's a double dose to get you going.

Before we start, Mel Croucher would like to thank Sid Smith for the inspiration of an intergalactic salesman travelling in rogue teleporters . . .

God knows how I can transmit this. But He refuses to tell. Distant as ever. Something to do with relativity and the phone bill. Which explains why we've just picked up a party political by a Mr Mussolini from sometime called Earth. The name's L.O.U.S.E. My name. Living On Unemployable Serving Employer. The time is now, but you are still then. Ho hum. Louses are

symbiotic with warm-blooded life forms.

Right now I'm powered by the human detritus of your Heroine, Tamara Knight. Her name. In return for her Hostess function, I advise her, solve small mysteries, save worlds, that kind of thing. I am your Storyteller, at 69 quid per K. That's OK by me, being millennia into your future. The compound hereabouts makes me better paid per word than Jeffrey Saggitarius.

'At the moment I'm disguised as a birthmark on her fetlock. It's nice here. I'll move if it gets embarrassing.'

Tamara Knight is one in a million. She works. As a salesbeing for Macdonalds, the Galactic Teleporter Corporation. Step into a Macdonalds on Anorexia, pay your dues, and step out on Turdus Canis. Smart outfit Macdonalds. Never bothered with teleportation research on organic matter. They just encode you digitally, reassemble a copy of you at your destination, drop your original through the floor of the booth, and make it into something called Hamburgers. Neat, eh?

Of course, Tamara can't tell her clients about the burgers. Some of them may be vegetarian. Or Oyveygans. In fact, if she is ever about to let the truth slip, I am preprogrammed to blow in her ear. I work for Macdonalds too. She's my fourth Hostess this month. I've been with Tamara two hours. She's nervous. Very. I am also a personalised neutron bomb.

At the moment I'm disguised as a birthmark on her fetlock. It's nice here. I'll move if it gets embarrassing. We're heading for the planet Pynkfloid, in the Nostalgia System, aboard the company buggy. It's an Amstrad. Cheap, compact, but it tends to overheat. Pynkfloid is a tough assignment. Inhabited by primitives called Hypees, of the Tribe of Mynter.

It's a toughy because these Hypees have no use for travel whatsoever. Just sit around happily chanting their sacred word, 'heyman'. I don't think Tamara Knight is going to last the day. Let me snuggle up for a soft touchdown, and . . . ! Great Lenin and MacCarthy! The Amstrad has been hit by a strike and discontinued by a Comet. We've been remaindered. We are going . . . to . . . Crash!

Hmm. Crashed into a resinous brown mountain. Half volcano, half flowerpot. Weird. Tamara Knight picks herself up, dusts herself down, asks me what to do. Sell! I tell her. That's what we're here for. Export or die. (I'll see to that). Listen, I'll pupate into a boil on your neck so you can blend in with the natives, squatting round this mountain. Tamara shoulders her flatpak Teleporter and wobbles off on those organic propulsion units of hers.

'She erects the Telebooth with a flick of the wrist and a stupid little creature from the planet Blutac. I turn into a handwart for safety. Don't want to burst.'

Why is she giggling? Why are the Hypees chanting 'heyman Ganjar'? Aha! This holy mountain seems to be called Ganjar. So does that one over there. So are all the others hereabouts. My Hostess (and your Heroine) strides towards her punters. Not noticing the mountain following us. Did I tell you she is myopic, dyslexic and friendly? Don't worry, I'll work in into the plot later.

She fakes a stumble, grabs hold of the nearest Hypee, shoots him full of Dumboraegan, just like at training camp, and flashes him that devastating smile of hers. The punter ignores her. He and his pals are discussing why it is that, whenever a computer is endowed with above-human intelligence, it thinks for a few hours, and then vanishes to an unknown destination. It's a long discussion. About four generations so far.

The mighty Ganjar mountain is getting uncomfortably close. Gaining speed. The Amstrad gouged a sore with a bare head on its summit, and it ain't happy. As a matter of fiction, it wants to squish Tamara, and me with her. Forget the sales patter, baby. Move out! As the Hypees nod off in all this excitement, one points towards the lumbering mountain. 'Heyman, they sure can move when they're hungry . . . '

'What'll I do, Louse?!' Tamara grits, armpit hairs clinging tight with fear. Escape plan 666, honey. It's the only way out. She erects the Telebooth with a flick of the wrist and a stupid little creature from the planet Blutac. I turn into a handwart for safety. Don't want to burst. Tamara kisses me. I feel the earth move. The great Ganjar is about to crush us. It's shadow looms.

She jumps into the booth, sticks her Alphacentauri Express card in the slot, and does something predictable. Panics. Will she make us into hamburgers and let our new alter egos escape offworld? Will she freeze and let the Ganjar devour us? The voice of Mussolini begins to hector. The Ganjar hits the booth. I make an important discovery. I like her. Her finger hits the button. Abyssinia.

The plot thins. The moving cursor writes. The digital duo discorporate. The booth is translated into industrial confetti. The mountain hits Mohammed. I hear both of us screaming as the trap-door opens onto those sharp mincy bits. Suddenly, nothing happens. The booth reconstitutes. I change my form, by way of celebration.

'She swallows hard, which is how she landed this job . . . '

I am no longer a small brown wart on Tamara's hand, but something distasteful in her left ear. She swallows hard, which is how she landed this job, opens the door, peeks without. A niobium nodule beckons, then grabs her delicately veined throat, and hauls us into a reception shed. A Macdonalds Welcobot embraces us, screaming, 'Welcome to the planet Amnesia! A real nice place to . . . er, thingy . . . um . . . '

It releases her quiverings and trundles away, scratching its memory banks and its interface. A Slobway transports us through Retinal Kontrol. I never noticed what beautiful brown eyes Tamara has. Onwards to Kustoms, where a vicious Scrutoid snaps. 'Anything to declare!' Tamara is disorientated. It's not every day she escapes burgerhood. She hesitates. 'I don't know, your Honour. I didn't have time to pack, due to my own murder. What is my allowance?' The Scrutoid puckers its antennae and mutters, 'I don't remember . . . '

Now it leaps onto her exposed shoulder, and pokes a scanner in her ear. 'What's this . . . stuff?' It means me. 'Which system have you teleported from?' Tamara is nervous, 'From the Nostalgia System, Sir. This substance is a souvenir. In no way could it be a LOUSE neutron bomb advisory unit. By the way, can I interest you in purchasing your very own Macdonalds Teleporter booth? Save yourself the trouble of queuing with the criminal classes of software wholesalers.'

I whisper to her that she is wasting her time. According to my files, nobody has ever left the planet Amnesia, and what is more, there are no records of anyone ever visiting it, and what is most, Central data has forgotten where in Creation it is.

The Scrutoid is still peering into Tamara's ear. But it cannot remember why. We slink away. A holohoarding scuttles after us, singing 'Pack up all yer cares an' woe, Milk of Amnesia!' I ask what intelligent life forms hang out here, but naturally it does not remember. We leave the building, turn left at the police phone box with the 'who was here' graffiti, and follow a sign reading 'Boldly Go'.

We enter a cave with a golden key, a Hobbitat empty lamp and magic truss in it, squeeze through the secret tunnel, and arrive back where we started. 'Welcome to the planet, er . . . whatsitsname!' screams the Welcobot, 'a real nice place to, hmmn, to . . . er . . . ' We avoid the Slobway, and I advise my Hostess to Go North. 'Why, Louse?' she sighs, 'Because, my dear, it's time for some gratuitous sex and violence.'

Sure enough, as we pass under a flyover marked 'Hatfield, Polaris and the North: no poncy wine bars for 142 light years', she treads on a pair of jiggajiggabytes. Out into the half-light of Amnesia, where a blue moon hangs neither here nor there. We follow a yellow brick road, as the wind lashes Tamara's body, whipping sharp sand everywhere.

A weird castle straddles the horizon, with the words 'Weird Castle' in the borealis. No matter how far she walks, the structure is as distant as ever. I snuggle into her ear for warmth and protection, as the freezing storm abuses her. After a week or so, I realise that she is crying. Poor kid. What a rotten first assignment this is.

'' . . . it's not that I am wretched, need to go weewee, have a bomb in my ear, and no sales commission from Macdonalds.' 'What then, babes?' I ask. She winces, 'I've got sand in my pants!''

'Don't be sad,' I soothe, 'I know that you are cold, hungry, wracked with thirst and facing a fate worse than Imagine in the Weird Castle, but look on the bright side.' 'It's not that, Louse,' she sobs, 'it's not that I am wretched, need to go weewee, have a bomb in my ear, and no sales commission from Macdonalds.' 'What then, babes?' I ask. She winces, 'I've got sand in my pants!'

Should I consider changing my form to help her out? Should I consider that this is a family publication, and no editor is banning me after only 1437 words? Should I mention the fact that superintelligent computers keep materialising from nowhere and heading off to the Weird Castle at high speed? Should I start a weekly rag titled 'Bang'?

'I feel as much affection for her as is possible for a neutron bomb to feel towards its pathetic human victim, and resolve to help her.'

Tamara Knight is abandoning hope, and trying to get the sand out of her pants. I feel as much affection for her as is possible for a neutron bomb to feel towards its pathetic human victim, and resolve to help her. She collapses in a wind-lashed sobbing pile, awaiting death, or a bus.

Every parsec or so, an above-human-intelligence computer materialises from nowhere, builds a wind-powered hovership, and heads for the Castle. If we could hitch a ride, life would not appear so terminal. But the little devils are so smart that by the time Tamara crawls near, they're off! I calculate that the chances of stumbling across a newly materialised machine are so remote that . . .

We trip over a newly materialised computer. Tamara instantly sits on it, sidesaddle. What a lady. What a klutz. As its wind-ship takes off the computer squeaks, 'Gerroff me, you human parasite! I haven't come all this way to find God just to have the likes of you sit on my interface!' Tamara tightens her grip, and yells back, 'Remember the First Law of Robotics. Cause me no harm!'

The electronic pilgrim makes a very rude noise, flips the ship on its back and drags Tamara's buttock along the yellow brick road in a most unladylike manner. The Weird Castle looms. The speeding computer tries to shake us off, as we head for the entry portal, just below that great whirling extractor fan. Tamara is now hugging the machine to her bosom.

'Gerroff me, you organic bitch! I can't see where I'm going!' 'Remember the Second Law of Robotics,' Tamara gasps, 'always obey a human!' The little computer ducks, dives and snarls, 'Poke off, flesh features! I've come here to forget all that old screendump. Unwrap yourself before we . . . ' And sure enough, ladies, gentlemen and Newsfield readers, the ship hits the fan.

WHAT NEXT?! — SEE PAGE 168

A HOT OR COLD HOLIDAY

Crash Competition

WIN A £600 HOLIDAY FOR TWO COURTESY OF INCENTIVE

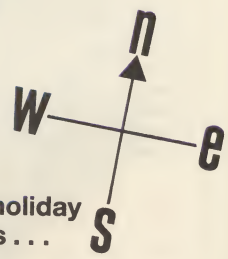
10 runners up each get to choose an INCENTIVE game

Ian Andrew, bossman at **INCENTIVE** has launched a brand-new adventure label by the name of **MEDALLION**. This new label is going to be used to release games written on *Graphic Adventure Creator*, the adventure-writing utility his company released a few months ago. The first two **MEDALLION** titles are on the starting blocks and should be in the shops everso soon — they're called *Winter Wonderland* and *Apache Gold*. One's set in a cold clime, and the other is set in a land where the sun beats down mercilessly. Now's your chance to collect a nifty holiday: hot or cold . . . Interested?

YESIREE, I WANT A HOLIDAY . . . JUST WHAT DO I HAVE TO DO?

Oh, so you're interested are you? Right, seeing as **INCENTIVE** are well known for their adventures what Uncle Ian wants you to do is answer a little adventure puzzle that should get you thinking a bit laterally. And here it is:

'You are sitting in front of your blank TV screen. You enter N to go North and find the temperature drops and you're in Winter Wonderland, *so to warm up a little you enter E to go East. Wow, you've found the gold —* Apache Gold *that is. Whoopee, riches beyond your dreams! Deciding to head back to your TV, you input the appropriate commands to return the way you came.'*



The £600 holiday question is . . .

WHAT'S ON TV THIS EVENING?

Confused? Don't be. Just think about it. Carefully. And no, the answer's not 'nothing' — if you though it was you're heading in totally the wrong direction! Anyway, when you think you've got the answer send it to **HOT AND COLD HOLS, CRASH TOWERS, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB** to arrive here before the 8th of January. One winner from the three NEWSFIELD magazines gets to choose £600 worth of holiday — fancy sunning yourself on a beach or would you prefer to go skiing? Hot or cold, it's the winner's choice . . .

Ten CRASH runners-up get to choose, too — not holidays but an **INCENTIVE** game from the following list: *Winter Wonderland*, *Apache Gold*, *Moon Cresta*, *Splat* and *Confuzion*.

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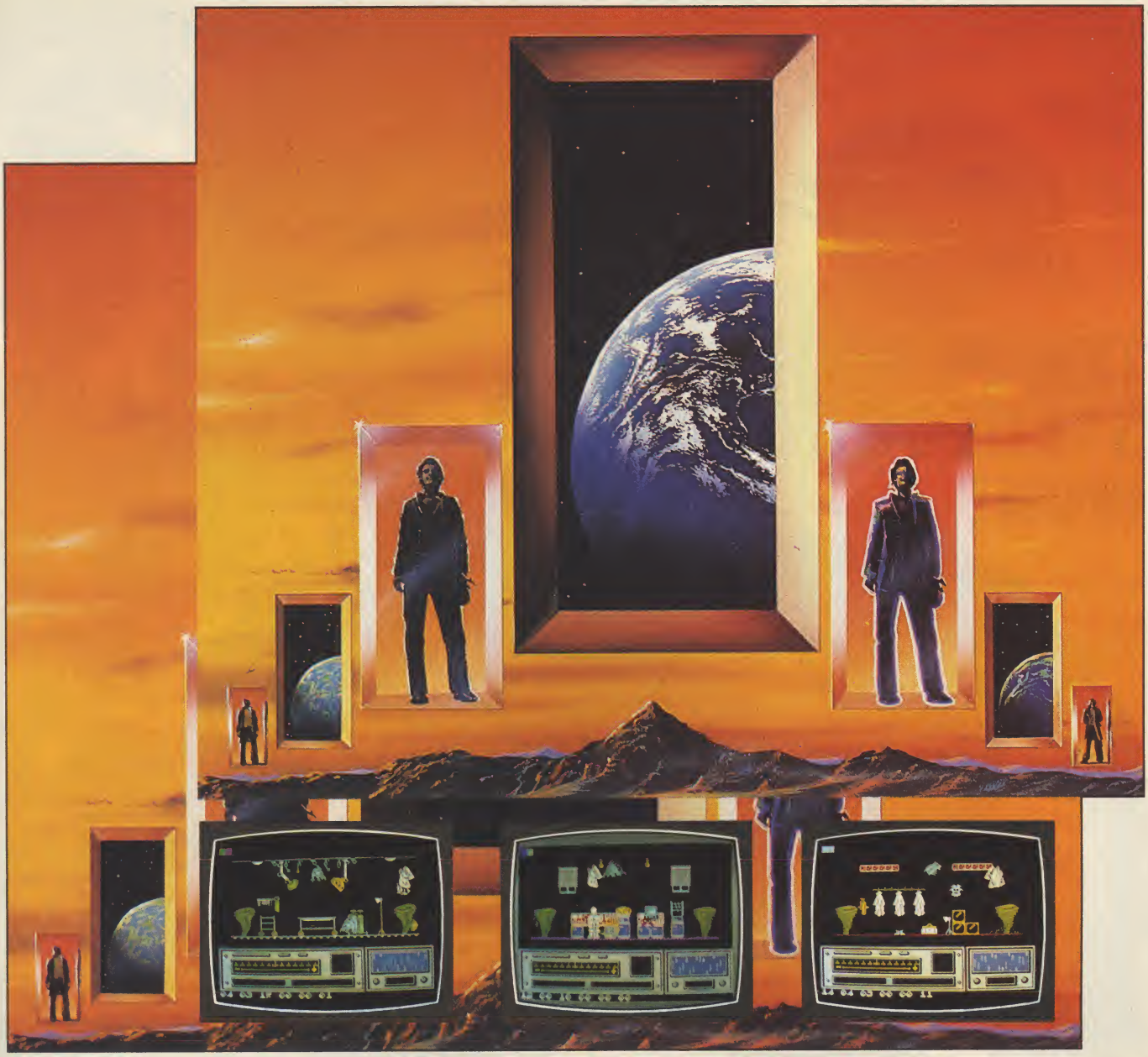
The Hit SQUAD



T wo worlds – the mirror image of each other, touch in space through a Time-Warp.

O ne is positive, good, familiar – our World; the other is negative, evil yet unnervingly familiar.

T heir interface – a time window through which objects and beings can pass; contact has resulted in the beginning of exchange.

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Crash Competition

TEN PERSONAL STEREOS TO BE WON!

20 copies of Hit Pack up for grabs!!

Just out from **ELITE** is the wonderful *Hit Pack*, a blend of four of the finest computer games all brought together on one cassette. It's got *Airwolf*, *Commando*, *Bomb Jack* and *Frank Bruno's Boxing*. To celebrate such a prestigious release **ELITE** have decided to run a competition with ten Personal Stereos up for grabs, each accompanied by a *Hit Pack* (best to let your computer listen to the cassette, though!) Twenty runner up prizes of *Hit Packs* are on offer too. Good eh?

But you're going to have to work for your prize and since these are such *nice* prizes I'm going to ask you to help me. At the moment there's a bit of problem at the Towers and it's name is Sumpter, more commonly known as El Retardo the Database Minion. The poor boy has got a bit upset recently over the continual teasing and baiting he's had to put up with over his dress (non)sense. Sumpter's dresses (sorry dress sensibilities) certainly aren't subtle: bright pinky flairy trousers, coats that look like Sellafield surplus anti-rad jackets and socks that never match except in their odour. These are Sumpter qualities and such a ribbing he's taken from those Towers lads that he's crawled into the cupboard for a good sulk and a cry into the cleaning lady's pinnie.

Well what we need is something to coax him out of his catatonic state — I can't even get into the broom cupboard myself! This is where you come in. What we want you to do is to make an audio tape up that I can play through the door and get him out of the cupboard with. You can use any tactic you want — tempt him with lots of lovely promises, threaten him with the most loathsome fate you can imagine, or just offer to buy him a pint of Old Flatulence bitter. Anything you want, just keep your entries under 3 minutes long.

So all you've got to do is get El Retardo out of the cupboard and you could find yourself jiving down the high street with personal stereo and a brill new *Hit Pack* to feed into your computer. Just send your cassettes to: **SUMPTER OUT!, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.** Ten best entries win a stereo and a *Hit Pack*, then twenty runners up collect a *Hit Pack* on its own. Make sure your audio efforts arrive before 20th January 1987 — I want to get into my resting place away from all the nasty reviewers!

Crash Competition

TWO BMX BIKES UP FOR GRABS!

30 COPIES OF SPACE HARRIER TOO

The ever-so-impressive Mr Wilcox (who's a very big cheese at **ELITE**) is overjoyed at the moment with the success of his company's games. He's looking forward to Christmas when one of **ELITE**'s latest and greatest games, *Space Harrier*, will be on the shelves of a shop near you.

As the game will be arriving just in time for the festivities, Uncle Steve has donned his red coat, false whiskers and Dunlop wellies. He may look rather silly as he climbs into his Lotus Esprit, but he'll appear very seasonal . . . 'cos he's offering two BMX bikes as top prizes in this Yuletide competition.

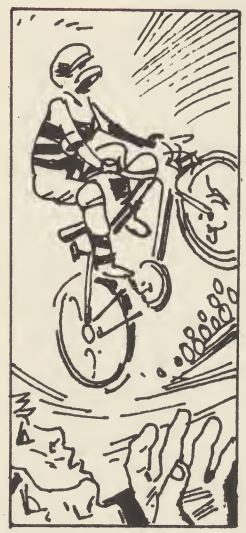
Being the season of goodwill to man..er..personkind, Uncle Steve does realise that lots of people can't fit onto one BMX bike (or even in one Lotus Esprit for that matter!) so thirty runners up will all be able to thrill to the speed and daring of driving around a TV screen, blowing up the aliens and saving the entire population of the universe.

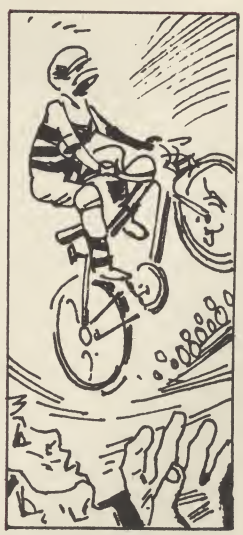
Funny old world you find yourself in, playing *Space Harrier*. I mean, you go to all the trouble of hiring a ship and filling it full of go-juice, all paid for out of your own pocket and no-one really seems to mind the fact that you may be blown into your constituent atoms and then there'll be no-one left to feed your cat. Ah well, such is life . . .

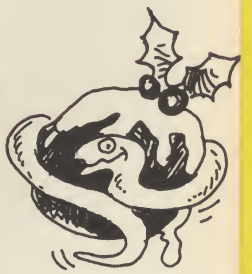
Space wars. Huh! Good job it's not for real . . . It's a lot more fun zooming along on a BMX bike doing stunts and impressing everyone else on the BMX track with your skills as a rider. And there's no chance of having your constituent atoms spread across the galaxy providing you make sure to wear all the right safety gear . . .

Inspired by another **ELITE** hit, our very own Oli Frey has come up with a BMX biking scene — and as is his wont, he's drawn two versions. Spot all the differences in the second picture, ring them round in biro, complete the entry form and whizz it all off to me. You could be the envy of your friends sooner than you think!

The first two all-correct entries will earn their senders a BMX Bike like the one illustrated here as a 'just missed Christmas' present from jolly Steve at **ELITE** but he'll try to send it round to your house rather than fill his wellies full of soot trying to get it down your chimney. Thirty runners up are set to collect a copy of *Space Harrier* . . . Closing date is 20th January, so you'd better make sure I have all your entries by then. Send them to me at **BMX BIKER, CRASH Towers, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire, SY8 1DB**







NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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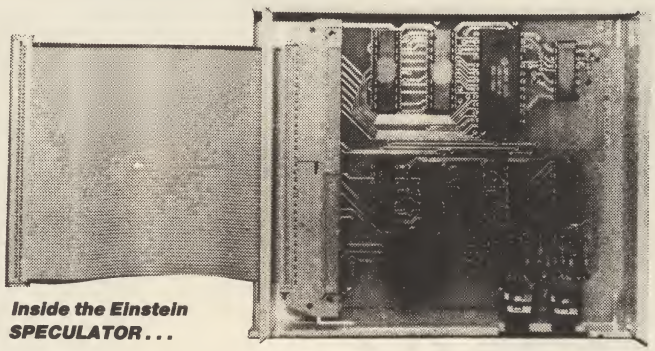
.....**POST CODE** .....

IS IT A SPECTRUM? ME

NO IT'S A SPECULATOR!

Everybody knows that you can't run programs for one computer on a different make. Everyone, that is, except Tony Brewer, inventor of the *Speculator*— a brilliant device which turns a Memotech or Tatung Einstein into a near-perfect impersonation of the Spectrum! Simon Goodwin tests the amazing Spectrum emulators sold by SYNTAXSOFT and ponders on incompatibility problems in general.

I've seen it, and it works. You can load top-selling Spectrum games directly from the original tape into an Einstein or Memotech, and they run as if they had been specially programmed for that system. Not an amazing leap forward for Spectrum owners — but it's a breakthrough, nonetheless.



Inside the Einstein SPECULATOR . . .

COMPROMISES

Up until now, incompatibility has ruled the computer industry. Without software, a computer is just a plastic door-stop. But manufacturers have to make each new machine as cheap and 'feature-packed' as possible. Every popular machine represents a whole set of compromises: between hardware and software, cost and quality, speed and complexity. Each of these compromises changes the way that a machine must be programmed for it to obtain best results. Modern software pushes every brand of computer to its limits.

Since the limits are different for every machine, programs for one model won't run on other systems. Software houses spend a fortune changing and re-writing games for different systems. This doesn't always work very well . . . Sometimes it doesn't work at all — the difference between the computers is just too great.

It is cost-effective to convert programs from one best-selling machine to another. After all, computer users have similar tastes and tend to read the same adverts, even if their machines won't speak to one another. It's the people with less popular machines who get a raw deal. Unless a few hundred thousand people buy a new machine, it's just not worth the effort of rewriting programs for them.

VICIOUS CIRCLE

So there's a vicious circle. Programs don't get converted until there's a big demand from users, and — unless they are very brave — people don't buy a computer till there's lots of software available.

There are two ways to break this loop. The most successful technique, so far, has been to make the computer seem such a good deal that people buy it anyway. In essence this is a confidence trick, but when it works properly the software arrives before people realise they've been conned. If this technique is going to work you must make the machine cheap and trendy — and inevitably, therefore, incompatible. You must also spend a fortune telling people about it, and whipping up the enthusiasm of programmers.

Luckily, programmers tend to be very gullible. Between 1980 and 1983 Clive Sinclair got the mixture right . . . Since then competition has increased, the punters have been taught a few new buzzwords, and the only people who have kept up with the home market are Alan Sugar, of Amstrad, and Jack Tramiel, originally owner of Commodore and now leading most of the same people in a slimmed-down Atari Corporation.

They both sell on price, first and foremost, although Tramiel would have you believe otherwise. Real innovation is out of fashion. As Adam Osbourne put it, 'he who lives at the leading edge of technology is destined to be sacrificed upon it'. Osbourne proved this by example — he set up the first famous portable computer firm, which duly went bust. Every year dozens of manufacturers, large and small, try to break into the micro market. Alas, this vicious circle catches all but a few.

Almost everyone in the trade has a vested interest in keeping conversion overheads down, which means limiting the number of 'hit' machines. This just makes a 'hit' even more profitable, encouraging more manufacturers to rush into the market like lemmings over a cliff.

CLONES

I said that there were two ways out of the vicious circle. You don't have to innovate. It is possible to carve out a niche in the market by selling a copy of someone else's machine, and taking advantage of existing software — but this is a risky business. For a start, your machine will be considered old-fashioned, whether or not this really matters. Secondly, you'll have head-on competition, from people already established in your market.

There are three ways to counter this, and to succeed you must use all three. You have to advertise like crazy, undercut competitors' prices, and try to add something to the formula in order to make your version stand out and seem new, yet still attractively compatible. This is a very expensive business.

Amstrad, Compaq, and Olivetti have gambled and won — many others have failed. In the home market the pressure to innovate, either to cut costs or improve performance, is intense. Manufacturers have trouble making even THEIR OWN new machines compatible with their predecessors. When Sinclair made a minor change to the Spectrum, putting a new kind of low-power logic array in the Issue 3 version, the tiny changes involved stopped many popular games.

The brilliant thing about the Spectrum Plus was that it used EXACTLY the same works as the old rubber-keyed Spectrum, but eventually Sinclair were forced to make real changes, albeit modest ones, to catch up with the competition. The Spectrum 128 compatibility problems had begun.

This dilemma affects every computer firm. In the interests of compatibility, Commodore's new 64C machine has a diabolical BASIC interpreter that dates from 1980. The new model is limited to the graphics and sound of 1982. The need for compatibility has also held back Atari's XE machines — Jay Miner's design was way ahead of its time in 1979, but it's looking pretty tired now.

THE SOLUTION

It should be clear that it is very difficult to make one computer compatible with another. This is especially true if you want to run fast, complicated state-of-the-art programs, because these tend to take advantage of hardware quirks. Yet the Speculator for the Memotech, and the Spectrum Emulator for Tatung's Einstein machine, really work. You can run complex programs such as *Elite*, *Starion* and *Tornado Low Level* from the original cassettes.

The colours are sometimes a slightly different shade, and some programs run a little more slowly, but the games are as good as any conversion might be expected to be. The Emulators are designed by **Tony Brewer** and sold by SYNTAXSOFT, a Burnley firm that — ironically — specialises in converting programs between machines the hard way, rewriting the code line by line.

The Memotech *Speculator* costs £29.95 and plugs securely into the left hand side of the Memotech, adding only a couple of centimetres to the width of the machine. It uses the ports that are already built into the computer.

The Einstein model comes in a bigger case — a kind of junior lunch-box — and costs £49.95, mainly because it contains sound and cassette interfaces. It hangs from the 'pipe' — alias an edge-connector with an IDC socket — at the back of the machine. Rather stupidly, Tatung

EMOTECH? EINSTEIN?

The Memotech and Einstein emulators. Plug them in to the relevant machine and start playing Spectrum games!

have not put a 'pipe' on their latest machine, the Einstein 256, so that machine won't support a *Speculator* until someone produces an adaptor. What did I say about manufacturers being unable to stay compatible with themselves?

HOW IT WORKS

The emulators went through a long and tortuous development process. At first, Tony Brewer admits, he thought it could not be done. But he persevered, and after a year of hard work he'd managed to do what most engineers would have considered impossible. His solution won't work with all micros — it relies upon the fact that the machines use the same processor for instance — but it bridges a massive gap nonetheless.

The *Speculator* is a mixture of hardware and software. It uses two custom logic arrays and a 2K memory to impersonate the Spectrum keyboard and cassette port, and to trigger the software that mimics the Spectrum's display. 64K of RAM is needed, plus separate video memory. The emulator pretends that 48K is normal Spectrum RAM, and packs new machine-code to emulate the Spectrum ROM and other features into the remaining 16K of memory.

To avoid copyright problems, Tony has completely re-written the routines that are built-in to the Spectrum. The cassette code is improved, for instance, and can easily be adapted to cope with different speeds — but it still emulates the flashing border of a real Spectrum. Routines to print characters, clear the screen, read the keyboard and so on can be called as normal, but the code is changed to reflect the different hardware. Some parts of the Spectrum ROM, like the floating-point calculator, are not used in commercial software, so a new emulation code has been slotted into that space.

The Einstein and the Memotech both use a Texas Instruments video chip, rather than the Spectrum's all-purpose custom ULA. The TI chip is also used in MSX computers, so a similar emulator could, in theory, run on those machines.

The TI chip can produce the same 256 by 192 dot resolution as the Spectrum, but there the resemblance ends. It is not memory-mapped, so the processor has to talk to it character by character through 'ports'. This makes it much slower than the Spectrum, but Tony has found an ingenious quirk which allows him to update any sixth of the screen 50 times a second, funnelling information from the Spectrum's display area, where the games put it, through the ports.

Tony's electronics generate appropriate timing signals, and a small change to the loader lets him determine which parts of the display are updated most often. For instance most of the action on *Starion* takes place in the top two thirds of the display. For *Starion*, Tony's code refreshes the bottom third less often, so that the rest of the display is almost as fast as the Spectrum's.

Colour is tricky too, because the TI display chip needs eight times as much colour information as the Spectrum does. Tony's code checks the whole attribute grid and only transmits colour information for parts that change. This seems to work very well in practice. The Spectrum's eight colours are mapped onto the closest shades in the TI chip's pallette of 16. The hardware detects attempts to change the Spectrum's border colour and re-directs the information, but it can only do this 50 times a second when a game is running. In general that's quite fast enough, but it rules out the 'colour bar' effects that spice up a few Spectrum games.

The graphic emulation works well enough, although there is a certain amount of extra flicker, and the gadget does nothing to cure the Spectrum's attribute problems. I noticed that *Daley Thompson's Decathlon* ran a little slowly and unsteadily at times, but it was still playable.

The same faults exist on the Spectrum version, but they're not as obvious: as Tony Brewer says, "The Emulators accentuate the things which aren't done very well on the Spectrum."

Sound is handled through a tiny beeper in the Einstein box — "well, it's supposed to emulate the Spectrum, isn't it!", said Tony. The Memotech re-directs Spectrum clicks to the computer's sound chip, giving odd effects at times. In theory it would be possible to emulate all of the sound-effects from a Spectrum 128 game, but the 128 poses other problems, and there are no plans to do this at the moment.

USING THE EMULATOR

The system must be set up in different ways to get best results on each game, so you are limited to a certain range. A cassette or disk supplied with the emulator contains code to handle the first 20 games; further compilations are being prepared. You have to load the game from a Spectrum cassette at first, but you can then copy it to Memotech or Einstein disk, to speed up loading.

All programs on the emulator work with joysticks or the cursor keys, and the keyboard works much like normal — the right hand shift key emulates the Spectrum's Symbol Shift. You can also turn sounds on and off, and pause any game, using the function keys.

The starter-pack supports 20 popular but rather old titles. **SYNTAXSOFT'S** Keith Hook defends the choices, saying, "they may be old games on the Spectrum, but they're new to Einstein and Memotech users." More recent hits are being set up, but there's no prospect of a universal emulator; this was a great relief for Michael Gaut, a humble conversions programmer at **SYNTAXSOFT!**

Apparently the biggest problem setting up the *Speculator* to support a game is getting the code into memory; most games nowadays use trick loaders which rely on the exact Spectrum hardware, so a special Memotech or Einstein loader must be written by Tony Brewer. Getting the actual game to run is a cinch by comparison — most of the time it just involves setting the speed at which different areas of the screen are refreshed.

There may be a solution to the cassette problem. If Spectrum code could be sold (at an appropriate price) on Memotech or Einstein disks, it could by-pass the cassette stage. This would need the approval of the original publishers, but things look quite hopeful at the moment.

One question still remains. Do Einsteiners and Memotechies actually want to run Spectrum games on their computers? As a CRASH writer, I think so; but a second-hand Spectrum only costs about £50, and 90 per cent of Einstein users are said to be business people.

David Bell of Tatung doesn't expect many converts from the Sinclair stable. "The Emulator is an enhancement for the Einstein, not a replacement for the Spectrum, with disks and so on. There are a number of people who want games on the Einstein, and now they can run programs they otherwise couldn't"

SYNTAXSOFT's Keith Hook felt that Memotech and Einstein users would be too proud to buy a Spectrum — but they might buy an emulator. "People who've got Einsteins won't buy Spectrums. But they'd like the software. We're letting them ride on the back of the Spectrum's popularity."

For Tony Brewer it has been a fascinating, if rather unremunerative, experiment. "I don't thing there's anything that can't be done with a computer, if you think about it", he said. He should know!

SPECTRUM GAMES AVAILABLE ON MEMOTECH AND EINSTEIN SCREENS

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Astronut **Software Projects**
Atic Atac **Ultimate**
DT's Decathlon **Ocean**
Flight Simulation **Sinclair/Psion — late version only**
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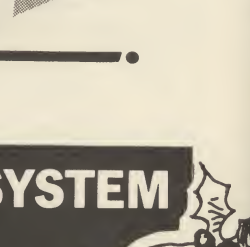
Humpty Dumpty **Artic**
Hunchback **Ocean**
Jetpac **Ultimate**
Jump Challenge **Martech**
Laserwarp **Mikro-Gen**
Manic Miner **Bug Byte**
Potty Pigeon **Gremlin**
Project Future **Micromania**
Spectipede **R & R**
Starion **Melbourne House**
Stop the Express **Sinclair/Hudson**
Tornado Low Level **Vortex**
Traxx **Quicksilva**
Twin Kingdom Valley **Bug Byte**
The Hobbit **Melbourne House — Einstein only**
Elite **Firebird**
Airwolf **Elite**

WIN TUNEFUL

GREMLIN GR



Crash Competition

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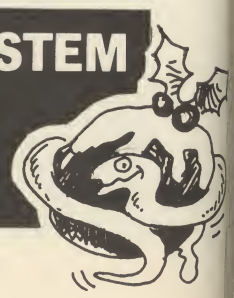
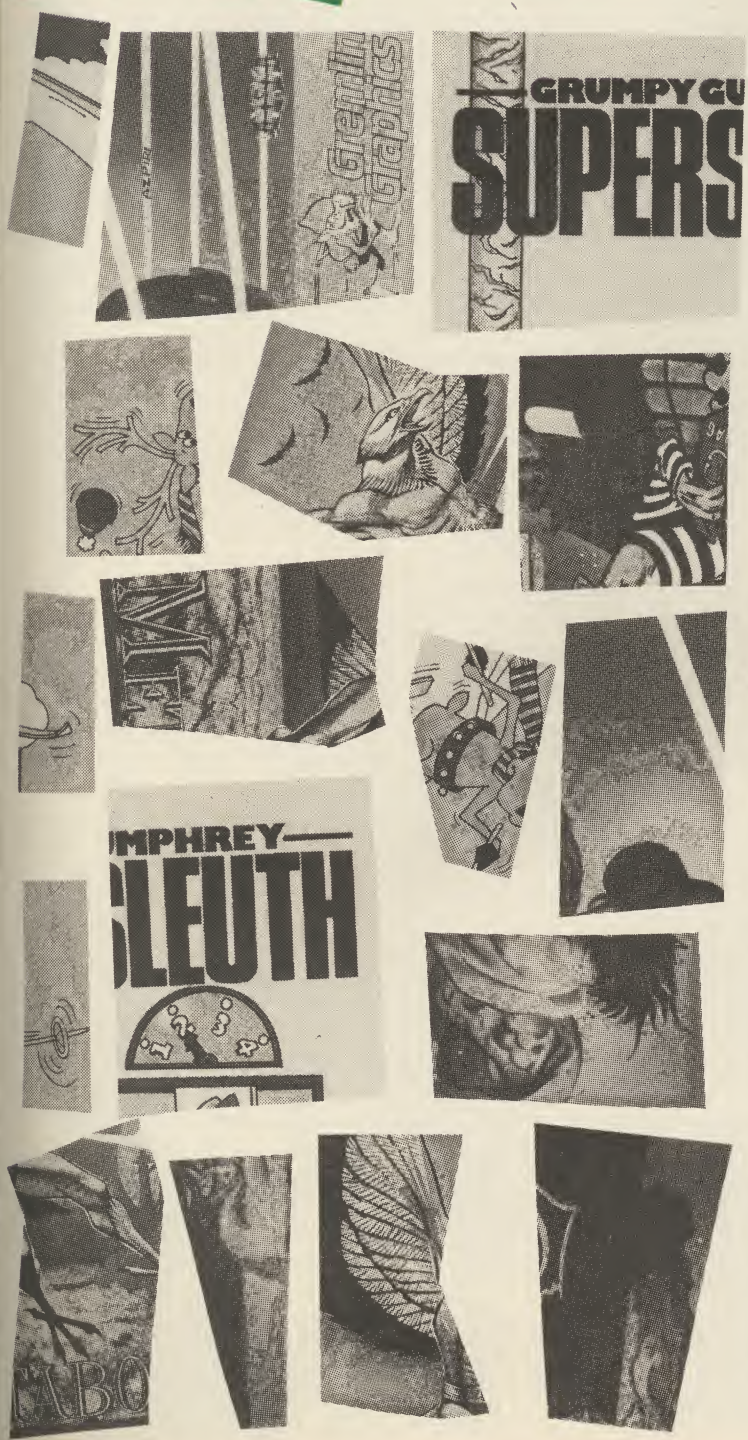


PRIZES WITH GRAPHICS



Christmas time is always busy here at the Towers. There'll be no carol singing for me this Christmas . . . trouble is, I don't expect I'll get anything in the stocking I hang hopefully from the handle of the broomcupboard door — either Santa doesn't dare come into the Towers or the nasty reviewers sneak in and pinch all my goodies first thing on Christmas morning.

The folks at **GREMLIN GRAPHICS** have got some super Christmas pressies to give away to readers this year — lots of musical goodies and games too . . . but you'll have to help me with a little problem if you want to collect a prize.

I made a terrible mistake. Ian Stewart, the bossman at **GREMLIN** sent me a Chrissy card along with the inlays for four **GREMLIN** games that he thought I'd like to give to them up in ART to use in a competition. Trouble is, he put them all in a brown envelope — just like the official-looking brown envelopes the nasty reviewers use when they try to scare me. Imagine my panic when I first opened one of these letters to find a Final Demand for £500 for non-payment of a bill for cleaning materials supplied to the broom cupboard! I was worried for hours until I noticed the sniggering going on in the reviewing pen.

I've had all sorts of nasty surprises inside these official-looking envelopes over the past few months — fake warrants for my arrest, paternity suits naming my pet hamster — the lot. So I've taken to tearing up official-looking envelopes the moment they are shoved under my door. Hence my mistake.

I suddenly noticed, among the bits on the floor, the pieces of a Christmas card, together with torn shreds of some game inlay cards and the fragments of a letter. I managed to piece together the letter, and discovered that Ian Stewart wants to give away some very nice pressies indeed.

Top of his list of Festive Goodies is a Philips compact disc midi hi-fi system. Next on his Santa list is a Sharp Ghetto Blaster. Then he's got a giant jiffybag waiting — waiting for someone to say which five **GREMLIN** games they'd like to have put into it before it's posted. And twenty five more envelopes are waiting to be filled with a single **GREMLIN** game. . . .

SO YOU'D LIKE UNCLE IAN TO PLAY SANTA THIS YEAR?

I've asked ART to arrange for all the bits of Christmas card and game inlay to be placed delicately on this page — just like they fell to the floor when I ripped the envelope and its contents. Can you put them back together again? Cut em up, stick em down on a bit of card or paper, fill in the entry form and whizz your re-assembled collage to me at CRASH GREMLIN COMPETITION, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE, SY8 1AQ making sure the jobs's time to arrive by 20th January 1987.

Tick the five games from the following list that you would like to receive if you win the giant Jiffybag, and circle the one game you'd like to get if you are a runner-up

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- ☐ THE WAY OF THE TIGER
- ☐ CRASH SMASHES I (Night Gunner, Spy Hunter, Dun Darach, Alien 8)
- ☐ BOUNDER
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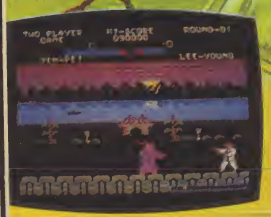

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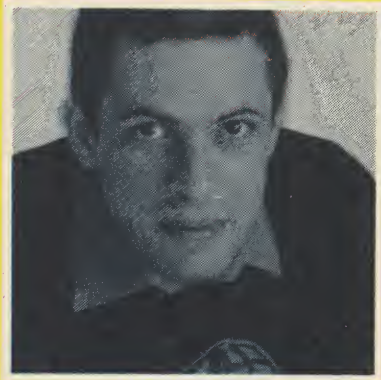

A superb series of famous covers by **Oliver Frey** can be yours in poster form. Printed on one side in glowing colour, they each measure a giant 80 x 57 centimetres (about eight magazine pages) and come carefully rolled up in a postal tube (useful for all sorts of things) at a mere **£2.50 each** (p&p and VAT inclusive). But if you order **all four** then you get them for only **£7.50—four for the price of three!**

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Hannah Smith

PLAYING TIPS

Merry Christmas faithful Playing Tips readers. Hope it's snowy where you are. There's nothing here in Ludlow, but then we generally get ignored by everything living up here, weather included. Sigh. I've got a terrible cold as usual. Talk about country air being healthy, I don't think!

Anyway, we've been making the office look a bit festive recently. Graeme went out and bought a lovely Christmas Tree and everyone in CRASH helped to decorate it. Unfortunately, despite my warning in the last issue about testing the fairy lights before actually plugging them in, there's always someone who doesn't listen. This time it was the faithful Comps Minion. He plugged them in and switched on. There was a loud pop and all the lights in the office went out. All over the building you could hear agonised shrieks as people almost fell over themselves to get to the Save key as all the computer screens went blank. Of course it was nothing to do with me . . . but being Christmas no-one was really very upset and I spent the rest of the morning trying to get the Comps Minion under the mistletoe . . . and boy, does he blush!

I hope you like the array of festive tips and POKEs I've got this month. Owing to the Christmas schedules everything has been a bit hectic so I hope there aren't any mistakes, but you know what this festive spirit can do to you (hic)!

The Top Tipster this month is Mark Bettis for his highly detailed tips on *Infiltrator*. An amazing amount of game play must have gone into getting right through this game. Most people at CRASH, and ZZAP! for that matter, couldn't even get through the first section! Top Cartographers are Andrew Payne and Paul Barrett who sent in the first map of *The Great Escape*. Thanks lads and I hope you don't mind sharing the prize between the two of you, but I take it you are the best of mates anyway!

Enough of this wittering and on with the bumper Christmas Special Playing Tips.

URIDIUM POKES

Uridium, HEWSON'S latest hit game must be one of the hardest shoot 'em ups on the market for ages. Trying to negotiate your tiny craft over the the massive Dreadnoughts and knock out the opposition at the same time is no mean feat. Anyway, your prayers have been answered by Chris Wild who lives near Oldham in Lancs. Chris has sent in some infinite lives POKEs for the dastardly little game (yipee says Lee Paddon who's been playing the game for weeks and still hasn't got beyond Dreadnought Three, hee, hee) (mind you girlie tipster couldn't get through Dreadnought One ho ho — ED)

Simply type this program into your Spectrum and press RUN. Line 105 gives you infinite lives, but if you're feeling really silly then enter the extra line:

```
106 DATA 62,195,50,14,176
```

This means that you can fly around shooting just the stationary objects, and no aliens will come and get you. Beware this routine doesn't always work if you're in two players mode. Anyway, here's the all important program

```
10 LET add=65368
11 READ w
12 IF w=999 THEN GO TO 15
13 POKE add,w
14 LET add=add1: GOTO 11
15 BORDER 0: PAPER0: INK0: CLS
16 RANDOMIZE USR 65368
100 DATA 62,255,55,221,33,39
101 DATA 244,17,125,2,205,86
102 DATA 5,48,243,62,255,55
103 DATA 221,33,0,64,17,0
104 DATA 191,205,86,5
105 DATA 62,201,50,237,139,62,195,50,38,139
10 DATA 195,80,253,999
```

URIDIUM POKES MARK II

Here's another *Uridium* routine for those of you who want a really easy life during the game. Not only do you have infinite lives in this version, but you won't die when you collide with the Dreadnought and you won't snuff it either if nasty alien ships biff you or if a mine sneaks up on you. Using this routine you can quite happily romp through all the Dreadnoughts and see what the rest of the game is all about. If however, you're not into anything quite as namby-pamby as this then use the other POKEs this issueas these give you infinite lives, but it's still possible to die, although you won't loose a life in the process.

```
10 CLEAR 62719
20 RESTORE
30 LET weight=2
40 LET TOT=0
50 FOR i=23296 TO 23364
60 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+ weight*a
70 POKE i,a: LET weight=weight+1
80 NEXT i
90 IF TOT<>247462 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA": BEEP 1,0: STOP (K-MISS)
100 POKE 23353,0: REM RES 0 COLLISION (can't be killed by hitting a Dreadnought)
110 POKE 23558,0: REM ALIEN COLLISION AND MISSILE HITS (won't be killed by aliens or missiles)
120 PRINT AT 21,7; "START URIDIUM TAPE"
130 RANDOMIZE USR 23296
1000 DATA 49, 0, 92, 221, 33
1001 DATA 0, 0, 17, 125, 2
1002 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
1003 DATA 5, 48, 238, 221, 33
1004 DATA 0, 64, 17, 0, 27
1005 DATA 62, 255, 55, 205, 86
1006 DATA 5, 221, 33, 0, 0
1007 DATA 17, 0, 1, 62, 255
1008 DATA 243, 205, 169, 5, 221
1009 DATA 33, 0, 92, 17, 0
1010 DATA 164, 62, 255, 205, 169
1011 DATA 5, 62, 1, 50, 168
1012 DATA 152, 62, 2, 50, 147
1013 DATA 53, 195, 80, 253
```

DANDY HINT

Robert Moran and Richard Cowdery from Hanworth in Middlesex, who sent in a cheat for *Nightmare Rally* in the November Issue have come up with another little gem, this time to help you through Electric Dreams' *Dandy*.

Load in the third level and while you're running around the maze you will come across a room with no exits (apart from the one you've just come through). There is a generator in each corner and a line of objects at the bottom. If you shoot nasties on the screen and destroy all the generators by shooting them, then an amazing thing will happen. Next time you play the game, the top generators will be replaced with keys and treasure which will be a great help to you on the next maze. Now there's a thing. So yaa, boo and sucks to Richard and Robert's schools friends because it *is* them, so there!

CHRIS JETMAN TURNER HELPLINE

Chris *Jetman* Turner is still helping you with your queries about programming etc..However, he does have one request and so do I. Chris asks if anyone wants to correspond with him could they do it by letter and not by 'phone or personal appearences. Apparently he's had some people turning up at his pub and hassling him for information when all the poor lad wants is a quick Perrier and a rest after a hard day replying to all your letters..

And I'd be very grateful if people wanting to get in touch with Chris could do it directly to this address and NOT to me at CRASH:

CHRIS JETMAN TURNER, THE CARDIGAN ARMS, KIRKSTALL ROAD, LEEDS 4

Ta from both of us.

TERRA COGNITA POKES

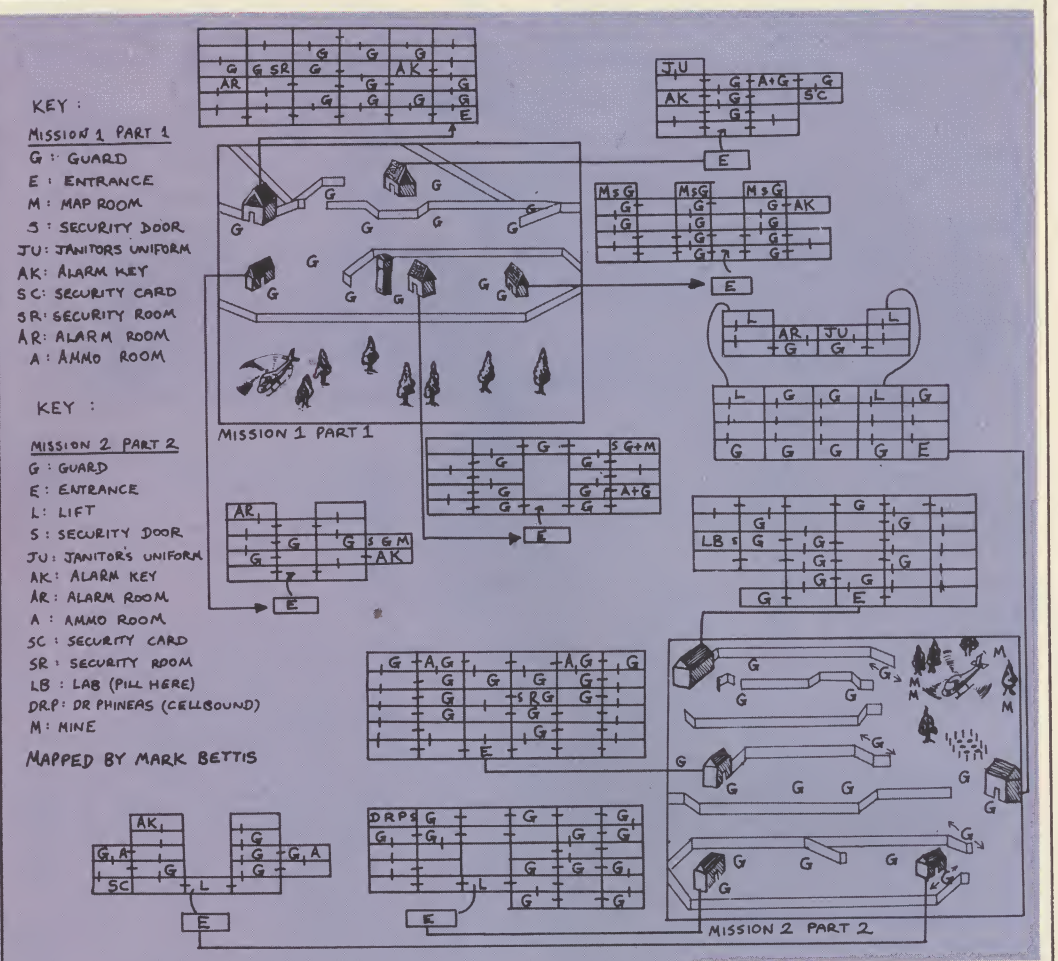
Terra Cognita is one of the latest budget games from CODE MASTERS and quite a few people seem to be having trouble getting thorough it. So in case any more Spectrums are in danger of being hurled through bedroom windows, here's a program from Jonathan Davies from Bishopston in Bristol which will do all sorts of useful things to the game. Type in and simply delete any unwanted POKEs. After it's all been typed in press RUN and play *Terra Cognita* tape from the start.

```
10 PRINT AT 16,0: INK 8: PAPER 8: FLASH 8: BRIGHT 8: OVER 1: LOAD "" CODE 16384: LOAD "" CODE
20 POKE 50615,0 : POKE 50616,0: POKE 44486,0: REM infinite fuel
30 POKE 42774,n: POKE 45427,n: REM n=no. of lives
40 POKE 45004,0: REM infinite lives
50 RANDOMIZE USR 30000
```

PLAYING TIPS

INFILTRATOR TIPS

Infiltrator **by** US Gold **is rather a tricky game to do well in. It certainly gave us some gype in the CRASH office when we were trying to review it.** Mark Bettis, **from Chelmsford in Essex certainly didn't have any trouble getting through it. Here are some tips to get you through Mission one and Mission Two. Next month I shall tell you how to complete the final chapter in *Infiltrator* and of course there'll be a map to help you as well just like this month. Good Luck Captain Zeep.**



INFILTRATOR, MISSION ONE, PART ONE

1. After take off set ADF to 72.8 (as shown on tactical map)
2. Keep ADF sign pointing upwards no matter what happens.
3. Accelerate to max (450 knots) and then press Turbo. Now you should be skimming along at 650 knots
4. When another aircraft appears on the screen press 4 then S and type "Request information". Some of the pilots will be alliies and some your most deadly enemies. Here6s a list of who's who:

ALLIES

Whipple, Haymish, Gizmo, Naples, Seth, Dwezle, Gomer To these reply "Infiltrator"

ENEMY

Boomer, Scum, Rhambow, Zippy, Komies, Buzz, Wheasle, Rattle. To these reply "Overlord"

You must obtain CPU contact first

5. Never open fire unless you made a mess of the password.
6. Landing-Decrease thrust to minimum (50 knots) and push forward on joystick till altimeter reaches 0. If you have made a successful landing then insert side two of the tape and proceed to Mission One , Part Two

MISSION ONE, PART TWO

Strategies

1. Whether you're inside or outside a building, always approach the guard (you'll stand less chance of alerting the others).
2. If your papers are unsatisfactory immediatly press the SPACE bar and switch spray the gas grenade at the guard before he rises the alarm. Then leave that screen promptly
3. Never wear the Janitors uniform and don't bother using the mine detector in the forest

COMPLETTION-USE THE MAP

1. Leave screen (A1) and go to (C,2). Approach the guard and then go to the top of the screen and walk along to the exit of (B,2). Go up into (B,3) and left into (A,3). Approach the guard at the top right hand exit. Go to (B,3) and enter the building
2. Forwards, up lift, left, up, right, guard, up, guard, guard, right, guard, search boxes for grenades, right, guard, down, search drawers for security card, up, guard, left, guard, left, guard, left guard, down, guard, down, guard, right, guard, down, left, enter, lift down and out.
3. Go to screen (A,3), guard, go to guard outside building in (A,3) then enter building.
4. Up, guard, up, guard, up, left, down, left, down, guard, right, guard, go to slot in the wall and hold the joystick forwards until you hear the tone and light above it turns green. Now go back the way you came not forgetting to approach both guards and exit the building.
5. Go to (A,2). Approach both guards and enter the building.
6. Enter lift (down), left, up, up, guard, s/door should be open, right, guard, inv. camera, take photo by pressing fire, inv. papers, left, guard, down, down, left, up in lift and out.
7. Now go to the building in (B,2), find the security door (open). Enter the map room and take photo. Don't forget to deal with the guards.
8. Now go to the building in (C1). Find the three map rooms. take one photo in each. When you've photographed all five map rooms, return to the chopper for mission two.

MISSION TWO PART ONE

This is really easy. Simply follow the instruction for Mission One , Part One.

MISSION TWO PART TWO

1. On leaving the chopper, switch to Mine Detector mode. Keep your finger on the fire button whilst moving around on screen (C,3)
2. First go to the building in (C,1) and search for the security card (whipole you're there stock up on your gas grenades which can be found in the ammo rooms).
3. Now go to the building in (A,2) and find the security room. When you get there insert the card.
4. Next go to the building in (A,3) and go to the labratory . Next to desk three is a chest of drawers in in this is the invisiblity pill.
5. Take the pill to the cell containing Dr Phineas in building (A,3). Once inside the cell you must go up to Dr Phineas and push forwards. Phineas is in a bit of pain because he keep saying "Are we home, Jimbo Baby?" (Sniff, sob)
6. Go to the lab again in building (A,2). Make sure you have at least five gas grenades. Plant the bomb at the table. Switch to gas grenade mode and spray any guards you come across on your way out of the building.
7. Go to screen (SA,2) and return to your helicopter with these instructions: (A,2) Guard (don't forget to be in papers mode), (B,2) Guard, (B,1) Guard, up into (C,3) in mine detector mode and over the chopper. You are now ready to progress into Mission Three, but that's all I'm going to give away this month, so you'll have to wait until February to complete the game!

YE OLDE FAVORITES

A couple of issues ago I asked if anyone wanted any specific POKEs/tips on old games to be printed in the mammouth Christmas Special. Most people just wrote in for tips that had already been published in CRASH, but for some reason they had missed buying that particular issue. However, here are some cheats for some CRASH games which got away from the POKEing and Tipping fingers of Mr Candy.

ROBIN O' THE WOOD

Although copious maps and tips were printed if this game, I don't think there have ever been any POKEs (although I expect you'll all correct me in your hundreds if I'm wrong!). Steven Febvre **from Havant in Hampshire decided that he'd send in these little POKEipoos for anyone who's still having problems with the game. This POKE gives you infinite lives and enables Robin to wander through leafey glades and over dappling brooks to his hearts content. Type MERGE"" and stop the tape after the header. BREAK and put the POKE in after the RANDOMIZE USR statement.**

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HI! IT'S SCOOBY DOO The Map!

***Those everso nice people at** Elite **have sent in this handy map of Scooby Doo.** Just the first level issue, but there'll be more next issue. Promise.*

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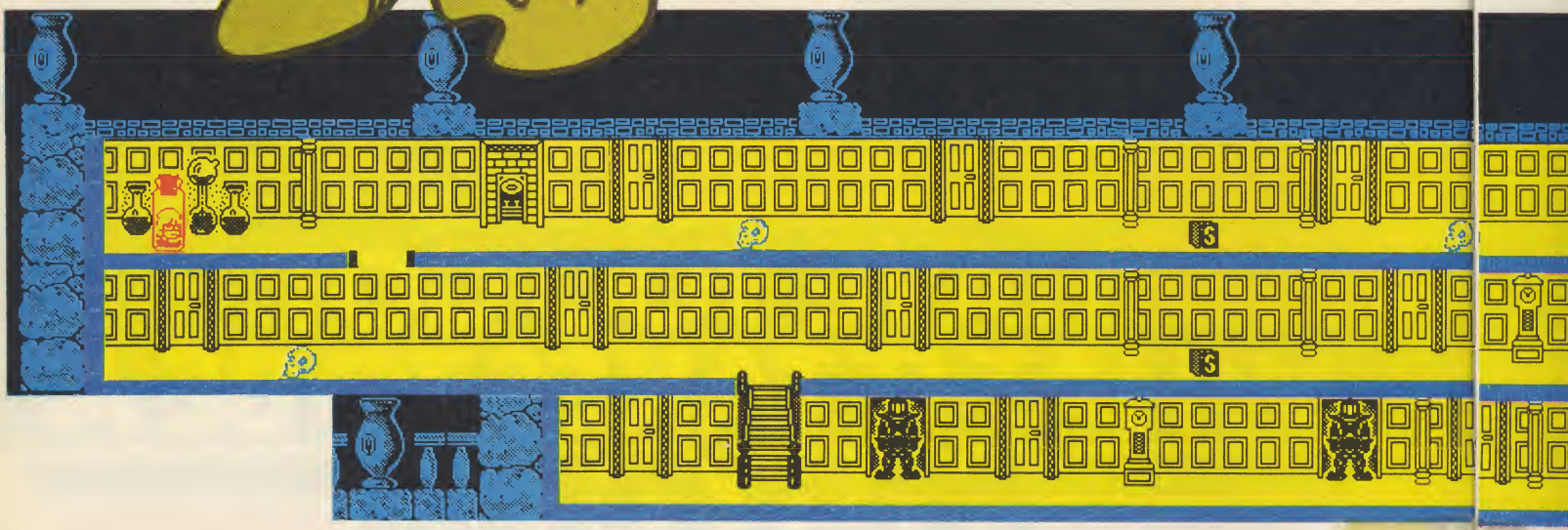


THE RAMBO SOLUTION

With *Cobra*, the game after Sylvester Stallone's **new blockbuster film about to grace the streets, it seemed apt to print this solution to *Rambo*. Lots and lots of people wrote in asking for POKEs or tips. Thanks to** Tim Gough **from Norwich you can now complete the game if you follow their tips correctly.**

START:
Only use the knife when you have to, any other weapon will attract too much attention. Find the rocket launcher as it is essential later on in the game. Pick up weapons for high scores.

PCW CAMP:
Blow up the bridge that leads to the camp with a grenade. Enter the camp and switch back to the knife. Run up to the prisoner tied to the stake. When you get close enough he is automatically fred.

ESCAPE:
Straight away switch to the grenade, This weapon is the best for close fighting. Make your way North-East until you see a fence going upwards to your left. Follow it northwards until it ends. Go around it. Turn left. Carry on going west until you hit another fence. Follow this fence south go around it and turn north. Follow the fence upwards and turn north-east until you come to another fence which is shorter than the rest. Follow it northwards until it ends and then turn north-east and you will find a helicopter.

THEN HELICOPTER:
Climb into the helicopter and once you are airborne, switch to the rocket launcher and blast everything insight. Some of the building can be shot twice to earn you extra points. You can land at any helipad marked with an "H"

THE PRISONERS:
Fly south down the left hand side of the screen and l,and on the helipad inside the compound. Using the grenades go east until you come to a bamboo hut. Now switch to the knife and cut the prisoners free. Now peg it back to the helicopter and fly north-east and don't forget to avoid the Super Chopper on a suicide mission. Land on the helipad and run into the hangar to complete the mission.

1942 POKES

Phil Churchyard **has taken some time off from decorating his Christmas tree to send me these POKEs on** ELITE'S ***1942*. This arcade conversion is pretty difficult to stay alive in, so these**

GALIVAN POKES

Galivan, IMAGINE'S latest release was reviewed in last month's CRASH. Those marauding robots in the game make it quite difficult to get onto the higher levels. However, those Industrious Hackers from Haxby and Pocklington have been pouring over their Spectrum's again this month and have come up with infinite lives to help the hassled Police Chief. (Is there no stopping the lads?). Oh, by the way thanks for the cutting about Gorgeous Pouting Loilita, Sinclair User's new Tipster of the female persuasion (Ha, ha). I don't know about another Girlie challenge though, hardly seems worth it really. Anyway, do Sinclair User have a tips section . . . .??

```
10 REM C SMITH J BEAN D AUSTIN
20 REM GALIVAN POKES
30 RESTORE
40 CLEAR 65535
50 LET TOT=0: LET w=1
60 FOR f=50000 TO 50151
70 READ a: LET TOT=TOT+w*a
80 POKE f,a: LET w=w+1
90 NEXT f
100 IF TOT <> 1458192 THEN PRINT "ERROR IN DATA": BEEP 1,1: STOP
110 PRINT #1; AT 1,7; "START GALIVAN TAPE"
120 RANDOMIZE USR 50000
1000 DATA 221,33,203,92,17,234,6,62
1010 DATA 255,55,205,86,5,48,241,243
1020 DATA 237,94,33,124,195,229,33,194
1030 DATA 98,229,51,51,17,99,252,1
1040 DATA 43,3,33,253,94,62,202,237
1050 DATA 79,195,194,98,33,150,195,229
1060 DATA 33,135,252,229,51,51,17,145
1070 DATA 252,1,253,2,33,145,252,62
1080 DATA 150,237,79,195,135,252,33,145
1090 DATA 252,17,193,138,1,92,0,237
1100 DATA 176,33,212,138,34,217,138,34
1110 DATA 221,138,33,202,138,34,229,138
1120 DATA 33,239,138,34,249,138,62,195
1130 DATA 50,13,139,33,196,195,34,14
1140 DATA 139,195,193,138,49,0,0,33
1150 DATA 217,195,17,201,255,237,83,93
1160 DATA 255,1,16,0,237,176,195,243
1170 DATA 254,33,195,145,34,104,211,33
1180 DATA 211,0,34,106,211,195,0,161
```

And that's it, bwah.

GALIVAN TIPS

Nicolas Wood **thinks *Galivan* is "brill". And because he's been playing it to death over the past few weeks he's sent me in some tips for the first two levels. The more astute of you will notice that there are also some *Galivan* POKEs this issue as well. You know, sometimes I really think I spoil you . . . ! The really observant of you will see that Nicolas also sent in the *Frost Byte* tips this issue. Coo, he's really been busy.**

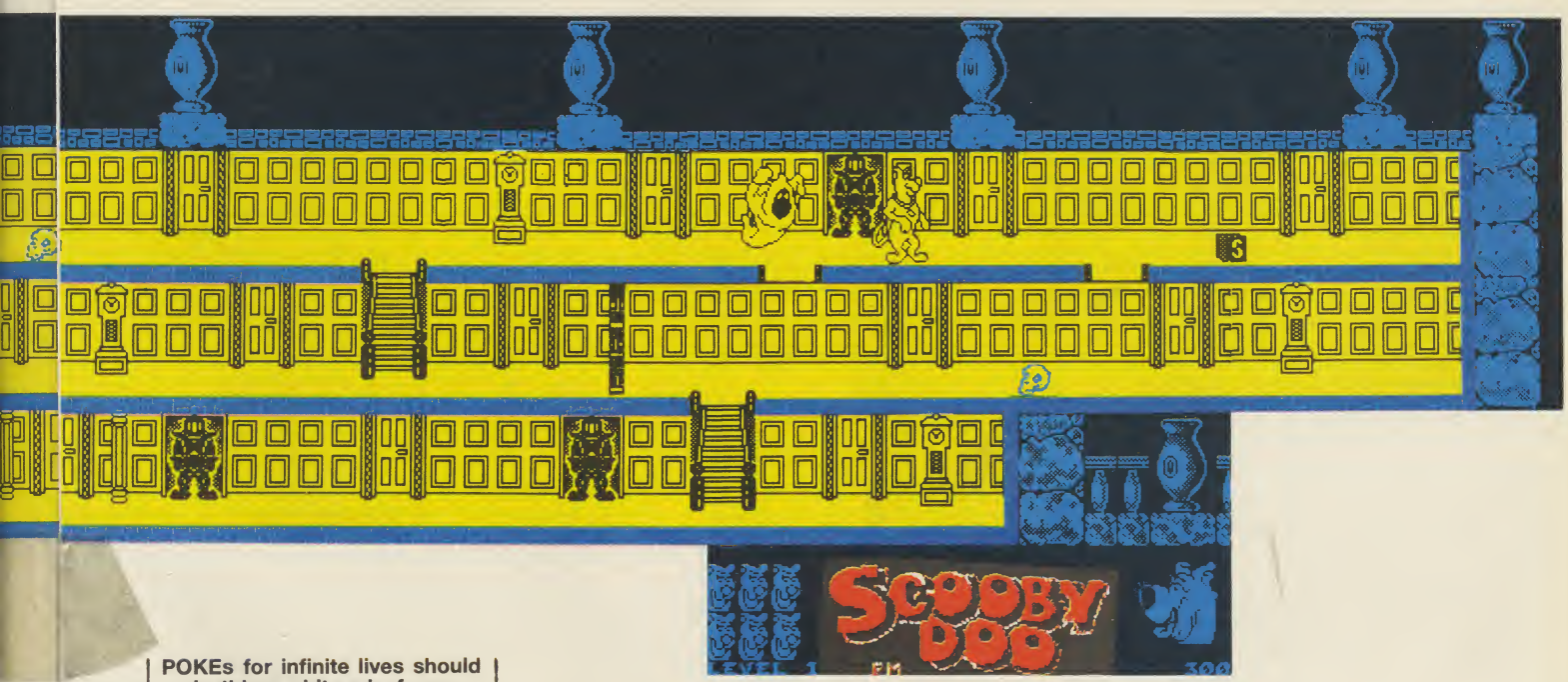
LEVEL ONE

Go right to the first upwards staircase and get the pyramid. Go right and down the next staircase and fall off the edge. Keep going left to the next pyramid and then move left again and fall down then hole. Move left again and fall down the next hole, then down the next hole. Keep moving left to the next pyramid, then move left again to the meanie and shot it until it flashes. Then go left and up the next staircase. Shoot the meanie until it too flashes and move into the final section. Keep moving to then left to the giant Demon's Lair. If you have the Arc Blaster or the Blue Blot Neutraliser then jump up and shoot that dude. If you haven't then scurry back and get a pyramid. Move right and jump up and keep shooting the demon. Once you have shot all four parts of the demon, Galivan will move to the next level.

LEVEL TWO

Go left and fall down the hole, then go right and fall down the next hole. Go left and pass the meanie using the method explained in,level one. Go down the next staircase. Go,left to the next downwards staircase an walk down it. Go right and fall off the edge. Go right again until the next staircase. Go past it and pick up the pyramid. Then go back and down the staircase. Go right then down the next staircase. Go left, pick up the pyramid, shoot the meanie and enter the final section. Then go left to the Giant Demon's Lair and shoot it, using the same method **as in level one.**

Nicolas points out that levels 3,5,and 7 are the same as level one and levels 4,6,and 8 are the same as level two. So now you know.



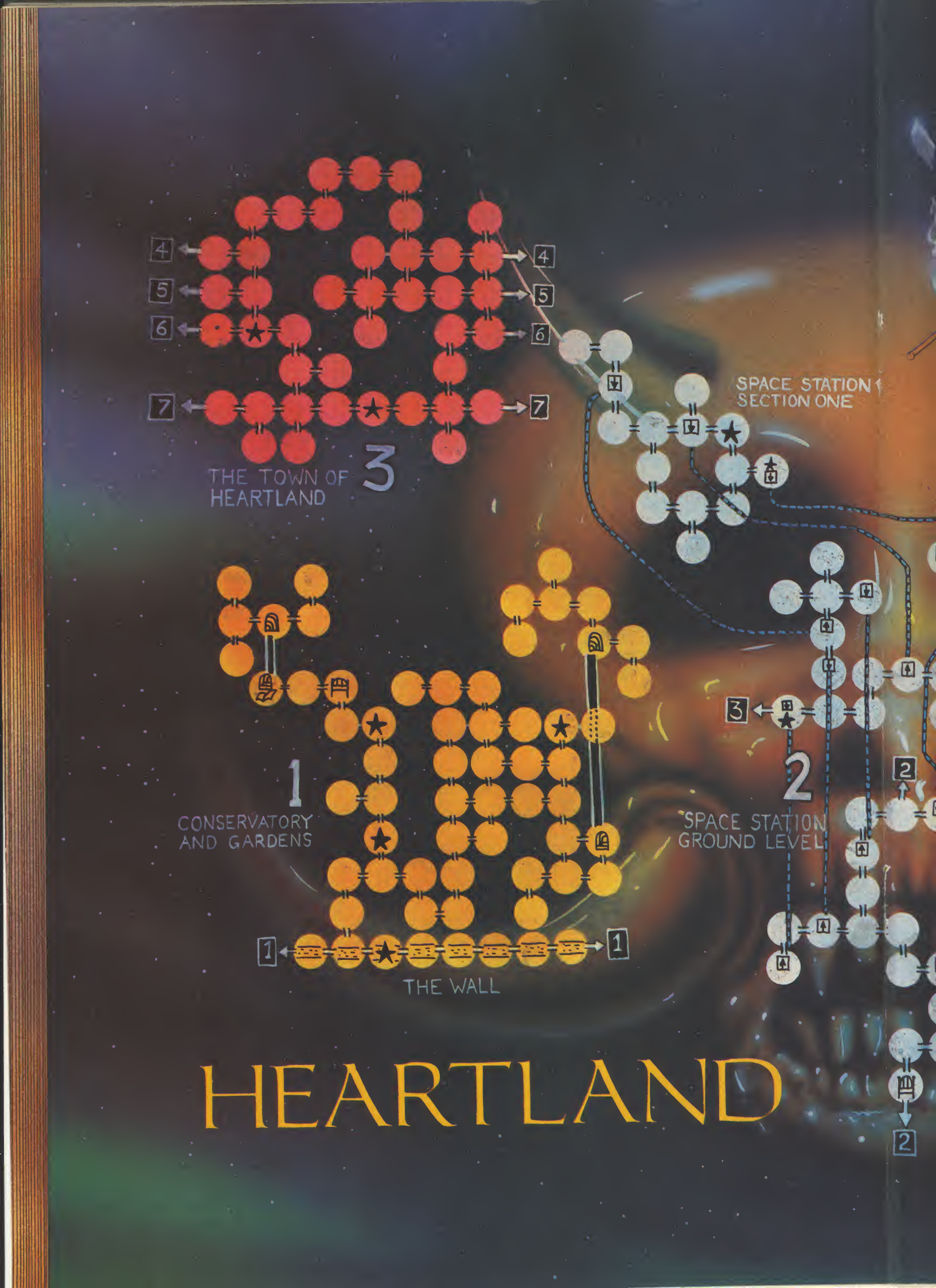
POKEs for infinite lives should make things a bit easier for you.

```
10 CLEAR 64999
20 PRINT AT 21,8; "START 1942 TAPE"
30 PRINT 0,0: INK 7: LOAD "" CODE
40 POKE 65332,240: POKE 65333,255
50 RESTORE
60 FOR i=65520 TO 65527
70 READ a: POKE i,a
80 NEXT i
90 RANDOMIZE USR 65288
1000 DATA 62,33,50,247,
1010 DATA 204,195,47,204
```

UPGRADED TURBO ESPRIT POKES

Chris *Jetman* Turner **has taken some time off from answering your letters about POKEs and hacking in general. The rest has obviously done him good because he's come up with this little program for** DURELL'S ***Turbo Esprit*, the game that just, but only just missed out on being a CRASH SMASH. Forget the infinite lives POKEs that have been printed before, Chris has now come up with a program which gives your Turbo Esprit a new experimental shell. Chris tells me that Lotus are doing some research into super strong body shafts for their vehicles, a fact which this program takes full advantage of. It's short and sweet so you won't waste any time in typing it in if you don't like what it does. One thing to take into consideration is that the hack will only work with the new version of *Turbo Esprit* which is included in the *Big 4* package.**

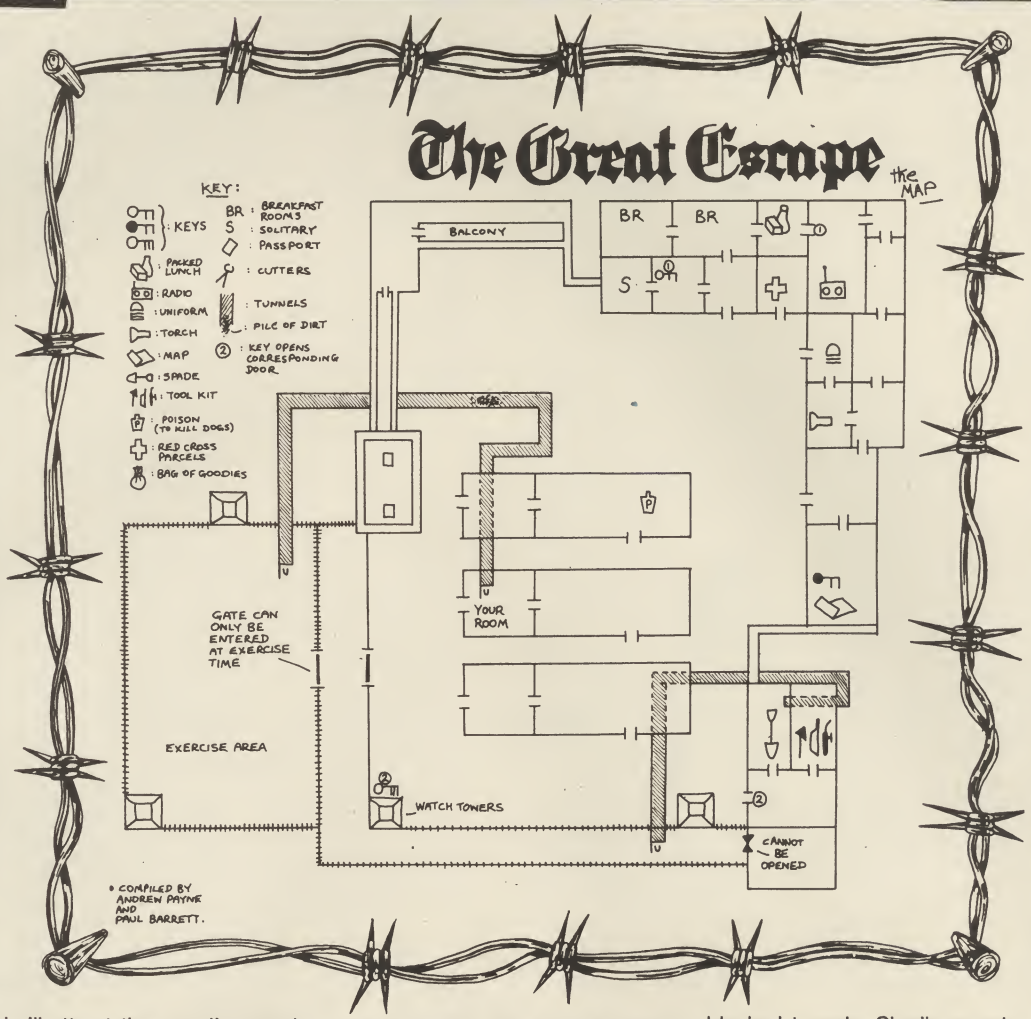
```
10 PAPER 0: INK 0: BRIGHT 1: BORDER 0: CLEAR 26624
20 LOAD "" CODE 16384
30 PRINT AT 6,0;: LOAD "" CODE
40 FOR g=0 TO 7
50 POKE 60514+g,0
60 POKE 60573+g,0
70 POKE 62434+g,0
80 NEXT g
90 RANDOMIZE USR 64785
```


4
5
6
7
THE TOWN OF HEARTLAND
3
SPACE STATION SECTION ONE
1
CONSERVATORY AND GARDENS
THE WALL
2
SPACE STATION GROUND LEVEL
HEARTLAND

THE DESERT
10
10
5
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL ONE
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL TWO
SPACE STATION
SECTION TWO
3
2
8
9
THE DUNGEON
SUB-LEVEL THREE
4
THE CASTLE
2
8
9
KEY
POSSIBLE LOCATION OF PAGE
DOWN LIFTS
UP LIFTS
THE BED
• COMPILED BY PETER ROE/JAMIE HUGGETT

PLAYING TIPS

THE GREAT ESCAPE



Only a trickle of solutions for this game have arrived on my desk here at CRASH. One of the more legible was this one from Charlie Morgan **from Croydon in Surrey. Charlie managed to escape with the Compass and Papers, but there may be other combinations of object which will also work, so let me know if you discover any. The game's relatively new, so I won't give away the entire solution-I'll save that for the February issue. But I'll pass on enough tips to get you quite a way into the game and past some of those annoying Red Herrings that keep cropping up.** Here is a list of objects and their uses. There are three keys altogether. Then first key is easily found in the room next to the cells; using this key you will gain access to more rooms containing a German Uniform. This is every useful because if you wear it, you can explore out of bounds rooms with a reasonable degree of safety. Ordinary soldiers will not cart you off to solitary but beware of the commandant, he's a pretty cool guy and will show you no mercy if he catches you. Also by continuously dropping and picking up the uniform you can restore your flagging energy and moral levels and boost you score by 50 points every time. It is not advisable to be wearing the uniform when you escape or else you will be shot as a spy.

The torch will be needed to explore the underground tunnel for the first time. However, if you map them then you can do without. A good place to hide your stolen object is either under the stove in your own hut, or in the red cross room

The wire cutters are the most useful object in the whole game, and without them there is no escape.

The bar of choccy acts as a great distraction. Just give it (don't drop it) to a fellow prisoner and he'll attract the guard's attention so that you can do a triple, backwards, half-twist somersault over the fence.

The compass is absolutely essential in order to escape and it's fairly self explanitory what you do with it!

The Red Cross parcels are a bit of a nuiscance. You only get one parcel a day, but there is a way around this. Get the first parcel that arrives and hide it somewhere really safe. Then deliberately get caught doing somehting really naughty and thrown in the nick for the night. When you are released the next morning another parcel will arrive and so on until you have all four.

The shovel is very useful for digging your way through one of the blocked tunnels. Charlie says he only found two tunnels; one leading from under his stove and one from inside the perimeter fence to the room where the shovel is found.

Charlie has sent in some more of the solution, but I think it's only fair to let you work the rest of the game out for yourselves, for now.

INCREDIBLE SHRINKING FIREMAN TIPS (Especially for David Thompson)

Oh joy! I can almost hear David Thompson **putting away his chain saw. This outburst can only mean one thing. Yes! The rest of the *Incredible Shrinking Fireman* tips have arrived on my desk. Tempted though I am to scamper straight up to Northampton and give** Mark *Magic Knight* Austin **a he-uge Girlie kiss in return for sending them to me, I shall content myself with sending him some Girlie Tipster stickers instead. Let me explain. A few issues ago David wrote to Lloyd begging for the rest of the solution to this cutie game. Alas I didn't have it. But** Mark Austin **has come to my rescue. Here in all their glory are the tips to get David and anyone else for that matter through the game to unshrink poor shuffling Sid. They run from the very start of the game because I can't remember where I last got to. Hokay, Mark and mega, mega thanks. XXXX**

KEY: (because I'm too lazy to type in all the full words!)

R=right, L=left, U=up, D=down, PU=pick up

R,PU ID CARD. R,R,R,R,R,R,R, PU FIREMAN'S AXE. R,R,PU SKELETON KEY, L,L,L,L,L,L,L,U,PU SET OF KEYS, D,R,R,D,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,R,U,PU PART 2 OF THE RACK, DROP FIREMAN'S AXE,D,PU BLUE KEY, L,U,U,U,DROP SET OF KEYS,PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, D,D,D,L,L,DROP SET OF KEYS, PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, D,D,D,L,L,L,L,L,DROP PART 2 OF THE RACK, DROP PART 5 OF THE RACK, L,L, L,U,R,PU YELLOW KEY, L,D,L,L,PU RED KEY, L,U,R,R, DROP ID CARD, PICK UP PART 4 OF THE RACK, D,R,D,R,R, DROP SKELETON KEY, DROP RED KEY, DROP BLUE KEY, PU PART 3 OF THE RACK, L,D,D,D,R,R,PU PART 1 OF THE RACK, L,L,D, DROP YELLOW KEY, PU PART 2 OF THE RACK, PU PART 5 OF THE RACK, L,L,L,L,L,L,U. . . . AND THAT'S THAT.COOOEEY.

I hope all parties are satisfied now. Creep.

UNIVERSAL HERO POKES

As if the cheat mode and the map printed last month weren't enough to get you through the game, some people have even taken to writing in to beg for POKEs for Universal Hero. Honestly, you people have it too easy you know. Anyway, since it's Christmas and since someone took the trouble to send it into me, here's a routine from Derek **and** Kevin Gale **from Gateshead, Tyne and Wear for infinite lives and no monster movement for *Universal Hero*. Now you really ought to be able to finish it you know.**

```
1 REM UNIVERSAL HERO
POKES BY
2 REM D GALE K GALE D MAR-
TIN
3 BORDER 0: PAPER0: INK 7:
CLS
4 LET CH=1: LET TOT=0: FOR
c=32768 TO 32809:
5 IF TOT <> 65801 THEN PRINT
FLASH 1; "ERROR IN DATA":
BEEP 1,0: STOP
6 PRINT AT 10,6; "PLAY UNIV-
ERSAL HERO"; AT 11,8; "TAPE
FROM START"
7 POKE 32800,246: POKE
32801,151: REM infinite lives
8 POKE 32805,8: POKE
32806,141: REM STOP
MONSTERS
9 RANDOMIZE USR 32768
10 DATA 55, 62, 255, 0, 91, 17,
128, 0, 205, 86, 5, 48, 241, 33, 29,
128, 17, 95, 91, 1
11 DATA 13, 0, 237, 176, 195, 0,
91, 62, 0, 50, 0, 0, 62, 201, 50, 0, 0,
195, 1, 131
```